

**CLARKE'S COMMENTARY  
NT, VOLUME 5B  
JOHN - ACTS**

*by Adam Clarke*

**Prophecy Insights Ministries  
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## EDITOR'S NOTES

Preparing Clarke's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments for an electronic format has been a task of considerable dimensions. The Digital Library edition is the labor of love of Sulu Kelley of Concord, NC, USA. "Mr. Sulu" converted the original text from the six volume edition (originally published in 8 volumes) authored by Adam Clarke between 1810 and 1826. We thank Mr. Kelley for giving us permission to include this the first electronic edition of a most helpful and inspiring work.

The reader is advised to note the following characteristics of this version:

1. There are no Hebrew vowel pointings nor are there any Greek accents. These were not a part of the published editions of Clarke's Commentary.
2. Most capitalizations and many breathing marks were omitted from the Greek text.
3. Adam Clarke had an exceptional knowledge of Biblical languages and the languages of the earliest (known) Biblical texts. The author provides numerous references to versions in various languages which contain nuances and/or insight into the meaning of a given text. These references frequently contained phrases printed in Arabic and Anglo-Saxon among others. We anticipated few of the Library readers would have an appreciation for these references, particularly since the script and dialects of many of them were outside the scope of almost anyone's experience or education. Since these references are usually transliterated and/or explained by Mr. Clarke, we have omitted these scripts. We have observed the following abbreviation conventions when the associated language/script has been removed from the text: [AS] Anglo-Saxon; [A] Arabic, Arabian; [P], Persic, Persian; [S] Syriac, Syrian; [H] Hindu.
4. The printed version contains material not included in this electronic version: The King James text, from which the author worked, and associated cross references are omitted as each phrase discussed is quoted in the analysis itself. Several tables with obscure material are

omitted as it was felt that archaic data on, for example, the motion of the planets, information long since revised and corrected, would not enhance and may even obscure the timeless portions of the commentary.

5. The printed version contains a number of archaic forms of punctuation and capitalization. These were retained if they did not seem to obscure the meaning of the text.

## PREFACE

### TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

## ST. JOHN

### WITH A SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE

JOHN, the writer of this Gospel, was the son of a fisherman named Zebedee, and his mother's name was Salome. Compare Matthew 27:56, with Mark 15:40, and Mark 16:1. His father Zebedee was probably of Bethsaida, and with his sons James and John followed his occupation on the sea of Galilee. The call of these two brothers to the apostleship is related, Matthew 4:21, 22; Mark 1:19, 20; Luke 5:1-10. John is generally supposed to have been about 25 years of age when he began to follow our Lord.

Theophylact makes him one of the relatives of our Lord, and gives his genealogy thus: "Joseph, the husband of the blessed Mary, had seven children by a former wife, four sons and three daughters—Martha, (perhaps, says Dr. Lardner, it should be Mary,) Esther, and Salome, whose son John was; therefore Salome was reckoned our Lord's sister, and John was his nephew." If this relationship did exist, it may have been, at least in part, the reason of several things mentioned in the Gospels: as the petition of the two brothers for the two chief places in the kingdom of Christ; John's being the beloved disciple and friend of Jesus, and being admitted to some familiarities denied to the rest, and possibly performing some offices about the person of his Master; and, finally, our Lord's committing to him the care of his mother, as long as she should survive him. In a MS. of the Greek Testament in the Imperial Library of Vienna, numbered 34 in Lambecius's Catalogue, there is a marginal note which agrees pretty much with the account given above by Theophylact: viz. "John the evangelist

was cousin to our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh: for Joseph, the spouse of the God-bearing virgin, had four sons by his own wife, James, Simon, Jude, and Joses, and three daughters, Esther, and Tamar, and a third who, with her mother, was called Salome, who was given by Joseph in marriage to Zebedee: of her, Zebedee begot James, and John also the evangelist.” The writer of the MS. professes to have taken this account from the commentaries of St Sophronius.

This evangelist is supposed by some to have been the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana in Galilee: see John 2:1.

John was with our Lord in his transfiguration on the mount, Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28; during his agony in the garden, Matthew 26:37; Mark 14:33; and when he was crucified, John 19:26.

He saw our Lord expire upon the cross, and saw the soldier pierce his side with a spear, John 19:34, 35.

He was one of the first of the disciples that visited the sepulchre after the resurrection of Christ; and was present with the other disciples, when Jesus showed himself to them on the evening of the same day on which he arose; and likewise eight days after, John 20:19-29.

In conjunction with Peter, he cured a man who had been lame from his mother’s womb, for which he was cast into prison, Acts 3:1-10. He was afterwards sent to Samaria, to confer the Holy Ghost on those who had been converted there by Philip the deacon, Acts 8:5-25. St. Paul informs us, Galatians 2:9, that John was present at the council of Jerusalem, of which an account is given, Acts 15:4, etc.

It is evident that John was present at most of the things related by him in his Gospel; and that he was an eye and ear witness of our Lord’s labors, journeyings, discourses, miracles, passion; crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. After the ascension he returned with the other apostles from mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and took part in all transactions previously to the day of pentecost: on which time, he, with the rest, partook of the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, by which he was eminently qualified for the place he afterwards held in the apostolic Church.

Some of the ancients believed that he went into Parthia, and preached the Gospel there; and his first epistle has been sometimes cited under the name of the Epistle to the Parthians.

Irenaeus, Eusebius, Origen, and others, assert that he was a long time in Asia, continuing there till Trajan's time, who succeeded Nerva, A.D. 98. And Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, A.D. 196, asserts that John was buried in that city. Jerome confirms this testimony, and says that John's death happened in the 68th year after our Lord's passion.

Tertullian and others say that Domitian having declared war against the Church of Christ, in the 15th year of his reign, A.D. 95, John was banished from Ephesus, and carried to Rome, where he was immersed in a cauldron of boiling oil, out of which however he escaped unhurt; and that afterwards he was banished to the isle of Patmos, in the AEGean Sea, where he wrote the Apocalypse. Domitian having been slain in A.D. 96, his successor Nerva recalled all the exiles who had been banished by his predecessor; and John is supposed to have returned the next year to Ephesus, being then about ninety years of age. He is thought to have been the only apostle who died a natural death, and to have lived upwards of 100 years. Some say, having completed 100 years, he died the day following. This Gospel is supposed by learned men to have been written about A.D. 68 or 70; by others, A.D. 86; and, by others, A.D. 97; but the most probable opinion is that it was written at Ephesus about the year 86.

Jerome, in his comment on Gal. 6, says that John continued preaching when he was so enfeebled with old age that he was obliged to be carried into the assembly; and that, not being able to deliver any long discourse, his custom was to say, in every meeting, My dear children, love one another! The holy virgin lived under his care till the day of her death, which is supposed to have taken place fifteen years after the crucifixion.

John is usually painted holding a cup in his hand, with a serpent issuing from it: this took its rise from a relation by the spurious Procorus, who styles himself a disciple of St. John. Though the story is not worth relating, curiosity will naturally wish to be gratified with it. Some heretics had privately poisoned a cup of liquor, with which they presented him; but after he had prayed to God, and made the sign of the cross over it, the venom was expelled, in the form of a serpent!

Some of the first disciples of our Lord, misunderstanding the passage, John 21:22, 23, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? believed that John should never die. Several in the primitive Church were of the same opinion; and to this day his death is doubted by persons of the first repute for piety and morality. Where such doctors disagree, it would be thought presumption in me to attempt to decide; otherwise I should not have hesitated to say that, seventeen hundred years ago he went the way of all flesh, and, instead of a wandering lot in a miserable, perishing world, is now glorified in that heaven of which his writings prove he had so large an anticipation, both before and after the crucifixion of his Lord.

Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 24) treats particularly of the order of the Gospels, and especially of this evangelist: his observations are of considerable importance, and deserve a place here. Dr. Lardner has quoted him at large, WORKS, vol. iv. p. 224.

“Let us,” says he, “observe the writings of this apostle which are not contradicted by any. And first of all must be mentioned, as acknowledged of all, the Gospel according to him, well known to all the Churches under heaven. And that it has been justly placed by the ancients the fourth in order, and after the other three, may be made evident in this manner. Those admirable and truly Divine men, the apostles of Christ, eminently holy in their lives, and, as to their minds, adorned with every virtue, but rude in language, confiding in the Divine and miraculous power bestowed upon them by our Savior, neither knew, nor attempted to deliver the doctrine of their Master with the artifice and eloquence of words. But using only the demonstration of the Divine Spirit, working with them, and the power of Christ performing by them many miracles, they spread the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven all over the world. Nor were they greatly concerned about the writing of books, being engaged in a more excellent ministry, which was above all human power. Insomuch that Paul, the most able of all in the furniture both of words and thoughts, has left nothing in writing, beside some very short (or a very few) epistles; although he was acquainted with innumerable mysteries, having been admitted to the sight and contemplation of things in the third heaven, and been caught up into the Divine Paradise, and there allowed to hear unspeakable words. Nor were the rest of our Savior’s followers unacquainted with these things, as the seventy disciples, and many other beside the twelve apostles.



Nevertheless, of all the disciples of our Lord, Matthew and John only have left us any memoirs: who too, as we have been informed, were compelled to write by a kind of necessity. For Matthew having first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other people, delivered to them in their own language the Gospel according to him, by that writing supplying the want of his presence with those whom he was then leaving. And when Mark and Luke had published the Gospels according to them, it is said that John, who all this while had preached by word of mouth, was at length induced to write for this reason. The three first written Gospels being now delivered to all men, and to John himself, it is said that he approved them, and confirmed the truth of their narration by his own testimony; saying there was only wanting a written account of the things done by Christ in the former part, and the beginning of his preaching. And certainly that observation is very true. For it is easy to perceive that the other three evangelists have recorded only the actions of our Savior for one year after the imprisonment of John, as they themselves declare at the beginning of their history. For, after mentioning the forty days' fast, and the succeeding temptation, Matthew shows the time of the commencement of his account in these words: When he had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed out of Judea into Galilee. In like manner, Mark: Now after that John, says he, was cast into prison, Jesus came into Galilee. And Luke, before he begins the account of the acts of Jesus, gives a like hint in this manner: that Herod added yet this, above all, that he shut up John in prison. For these reasons, as is said, the Apostle John was entreated to relate, in the Gospel according to him, the time omitted by the four evangelists, and the things done by our Savior in that space, before the imprisonment of the Baptist; And they add, farther, that he himself hints as much, saying, This beginning of miracles did Jesus: as also in the history of the acts of Jesus he makes mention of the Baptist as still baptizing in AEnon, nigh unto Salem. And it is thought that he expressly declares as much, when he says, For John was not yet cast into prison. John, therefore, in the Gospel according to him, relates the things done by Christ while the Baptist was not yet cast into prison. But the other three evangelists relate the things that followed the Baptist's confinement. Whoever attends to these things will not any longer think the evangelists disagree with each other, forasmuch as the Gospel according to John contains the first actions of Christ, while the others give the history of the

following time. And for the same reason John has omitted the genealogy of our Savior according to the flesh, it having been recorded before by Matthew and Luke; but he begins with his divinity, which had been reserved by the Holy Ghost for him, as the most excellent person." The whole of this chapter, with the preceding and following, may be profitably consulted by the reader. See also Lardner, Works, vol. iv. 224, and vi. 156-222.

Besides the Gospel before us, John is generally reputed to have been the author of the three epistles which go under his name, and of the Apocalypse. The former certainly breathe the genuine spirit of this apostle; and are invaluable monuments of his spiritual knowledge and deep piety, as well as of his Divine inspiration: as the Gospel and Epistles prove him to have been an evangelist and apostle, his book of Revelations ranks him among the profoundest of the prophets.

Learned men are not wholly agreed about the language in which this Gospel was originally written. Some think St. John wrote it in his own native tongue, the Aramean or Syriac, and that it was afterwards translated, by rather an unskilful hand, into Greek. This opinion is not supported by strong arguments. That it was originally written in Greek is the general and most likely opinion.

What the design of St. John was, in writing this Gospel, has divided and perplexed many critics and learned divines. Some suppose that it was to refute the errors taught by one Cerinthus, who rose up at that time, and asserted that Jesus was not born of a virgin, but was the real son of Joseph and Mary; that, at his baptism, the Christ, what we term the Divine nature, descended into him, in the form of a dove, by whose influence he worked all his miracles; and that, when he was about to suffer, this Christ, or Divine nature, departed from him, and left the man Jesus to suffer death. See Irenaeus, advers. Haereses.

Others suppose he wrote with the prime design of confuting the heresy of the Gnostics, a class of mongrels who derived their existence from Simon Magus, and who formed their system out of Heathenism, Judaism, and Christianity; and whose peculiar, involved, and obscure opinions cannot be all introduced in this place. It is enough to know that, concerning the person of our Lord, they held opinions similar to those of Cerinthus; and

that they arrogated to themselves the highest degrees of knowledge and spirituality. They supposed that the Supreme Being had all things and beings included, in a certain seminal manner, in himself; and that out of Him they were produced. From God, or Bythos, the infinite Abyss, they derived a multitude of subaltern governors, called AEons; whom they divided into several classes, among which we may distinguish the following nine. **πατηρ**, Father; **χαρις**, Grace; **μονογενης**, First-begotten; **αληθεια**, Truth; **λογος**, Word; **φως**, Light; **ζωη**, Life; **ανθρωπος**, Man; and **εκκλησια**, Church; all these merging in what they termed **πληρωμα**, Fulness, or complete round of being and blessings: terms which are of frequent occurrence in John's Gospel, and which some think he has introduced to fix their proper sense, and to rescue them from being abused by the Gnostics. But this is not very likely, as the Gnostics themselves appealed to St. John's Gospel for a confirmation of their peculiar opinions, because of his frequent use of the above terms. These sentiments, therefore, do not appear to be tenable.

Professor Michaelis has espoused the opinion, that it was written against the Gnostics and Sabians, and has advanced several arguments in its favor; the chief of which are the following.

“The plan which St. John adopted, to confute the tenets of the Gnostics and the Sabians, was first to deliver a set of aphorisms, as counterpositions to these tenets; and then to relate such speeches and miracles of Christ as confirmed the truth of what he had advanced. We must not suppose that the confutation of the Gnostic and Sabian errors is confined to the fourteen first verses of St. John's Gospel; for, in the first place, it is evident that many of Christ's speeches which occur in the following part of the Gospel, were selected by the evangelist with a view of proving the positions laid down in these fourteen verses; and, secondly, the positions themselves are not proofs, but merely declarations made by the evangelist. It is true that for us Christians, who acknowledge the Divine authority of St. John, his bare word is sufficient; but as the apostle had to combat with adversaries who made no such acknowledgment, the only method of convincing them was to support his assertion by the authority of Christ himself.

“Some of the Gnostics placed the ‘WORD’ above all the other AEons, and next to the Supreme Being: but Cerinthus placed the ‘Only begotten’ first, and then the ‘WORD.’ Now St. John lays down the following positions: —

“1. The Word and the Only begotten are not different, but the same person, John 1:14. ‘We beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father.’ This is a strong position against the Gnostics, who usually ascribed all the Divine qualities to the Only begotten. The proofs of this position are: the testimony of John the Baptist, John 1:18, 34; 3:35, 36; the conversation of Christ with Nicodemus, John 3:16, 18, in which Christ calls himself the only begotten Son; the speech delivered by Christ to the Jews, John 5:17-47; and other passages, in which he calls God his Father.

“2. The Word was never made, but existed from the beginning, John 1:1. The Gnostics granted that the Word existed before the creation; but they did not admit that the Word existed from all eternity. The Supreme Being, according to their tenets, and, according to Cerinthus, the only begotten Son likewise, as also the matter from which the world was formed, were prior in existence to the Word. This notion is contradicted by St. John, who asserts that the Word existed from all eternity. As a proof of this position may be alleged perhaps what Christ says, John 8:58.

“3. The Word was in the beginning with God, John 1:1, 2. The Gnostics must have maintained a contrary doctrine, or St. John, in confuting their tenets, would not have thought it necessary to advance this position, since God is omnipresent, and therefore all things are present with him.

“4. The Word was God, John 1:1. The expression, GOD, must be here taken in its highest sense or this position will contain nothing contrary to the doctrine of the Gnostics. For they admitted that the Word was an AEon, and therefore a deity in the lower sense of the word. The proofs of this position are contained in the 5th, 10th, (ver. 30,) and 14th (ver. 7, 11) chapters. {John 5:1ff; 10:30; 14:7, 11}

“5. The Word was the creator of all things, John 1:3, 10. This is one of St. John’s principal positions against the Gnostics, who asserted that the world was made by a malevolent being. The assertion, that the Word was the creator of the world, is equivalent to the assertion, that he was GOD in the highest possible sense. In whatever form or manner we may think of

God, the notion of Creator is inseparable from the notion of Supreme Being. We argue from the creation to the CREATOR; and this very argument is one proof of the existence of God.

“6. In the Word was life, John 1:4. The Gnostics, who considered the different attributes or operations of the Almighty, not as so many separate energies, but as so many separate persons, considered Life as a distinct AEon from the Word. Without this AEon, the world, they said, would be in a state of torpor; and hence they called it not only Life, but the Mother of the living; from this AEon, therefore, might be expected the resurrection of the dead and eternal life. The proofs of this position are in John 3:15, 21; the whole of the sixth, and the greatest part of the eighth chapter, as also John 14:6, 9, 19. But no part of St. John’s Gospel is a more complete proof of this position than his full and circumstantial account of the resurrection of Lazarus, which the other evangelists had omitted.”-See more in Michaelis’s Introduction to the New Testament. And, for a general account of the LOGOS, see John 1, at the end. {John 1:51 }

Though it is likely that the Gnostics held all these strange doctrines, and that many parts in John’s Gospel may be successfully quoted against them, yet I must own I think the evangelist had a more general end in view than the confutation of their heresies. It is more likely that he wrote for the express purpose of giving the Jews, his countrymen, proper notions of the Messiah and his kingdom; and to prove that Jesus, who had lately appeared among them, was this CHRIST. His own words sufficiently inform us of his motive, object, and design, in writing this Gospel: These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name, John 20:31. This is a design as noble as it is simple; and every way highly becoming the wisdom and goodness of God.

# THE GOSPEL

**ACCORDING TO**

**ST. JOHN.**

-Usherian years of the World, 3999-4033. -Alexandrian years of the World, 5497-5531. -Antiochian years of the World, 5487-5621. -Constantinopolitan AEra of the World, 5503-5537. -Rabbinical years of the World, 3754-3788. -Years of the Julian Period, 4708-4742. -AEra of the Seleucide, 307-341. -From B.C. 5, to A.D. 29. -From An. Olymp. CXCI. 3, to CCII. 1. -Years of the building of Rome, 748-782. -Years of the Julian AEra, 41-75. -Years of the Caesarean AEra of Antioch, 44-78. -Years of the Spanish AEra, 34-68. -Years of the Paschal Cycle, or Dionysian Period, 529-31. -Years of the Christian Lunar Cycle, or Golden Number, 15-11. -Years of the Rabbinical Lunar Cycle, 12-8. -Years of the Solar Cycle, 4-10. -From the 25th year of the reign of the Emperor Augustus to the 18th of that of Tiberius.

N. B. As it was impossible to ascertain the precise dates of several transactions recorded in this Gospel, I have constructed the above Chronology in all the A Eras which it includes, so as to comprehend the whole of our Lord's life on earth, from his conception to his ascension, which is generally allowed to comprise the space of 34 years, Therefore, 34, added to the first date in any of the above A Eras, gives the second date; e.g. Usherian year of the world, 3099+34=4033, and so of the rest.

## CHAPTER 1.

*The eternity of the Divine Logos, or Word of God, the dispenser of light and life, 1-5. The mission of John the Baptist, 6-13. The incarnation of the Logos or Word of God, 14. John's testimony concerning the Logos, 15-18. The priests and Levites question him concerning his mission and his baptism, 19-22. His answer, 23-28. His farther testimony on seeing Christ, 29-34. He points him out to two of his disciples, who thereupon follow Jesus, 35-37. Christ's address to them, 38, 39. Andrew invites his brother, Simon Peter; Christ's address to him, 40-42. Christ calls Philip, and Philip invites Nathanael, 43-46. Christ's character of Nathanael, 47. A remarkable conversation between him and this disciple, 48-61.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

John's introduction is from John 1:1-18. Some harmonists suppose it to end with John 1:14. but, from the connection of the whole, John 1:18 appears to be its natural close, at it contains a reason why the Logos or Word was made flesh. John 1:15 refers to John 1:6-8, and in these passages John's testimony is anticipated in order of time, and is very fitly mentioned to illustrate Christ's pre-eminence. John 1:16, 17 have a plain reference to John 1:14. See Bp. Newcome.

**Verse 1. *In the beginning***— That is, before any thing was formed-ere God began the great work of creation. This is the meaning of the word in Genesis 1:1, to which the evangelist evidently alludes. This phrase fully proves, in the mouth of an inspired writer, that Jesus Christ was no part of the creation, as he existed when no part of that existed; and that consequently he is no creature, as all created nature was formed by him: for without him was nothing made that is made, John 1:3. Now, as what was before creation must be eternal, and as what gave being to all things, could not have borrowed or derived its being from any thing, therefore Jesus, who was before all things and who made all things, must necessarily be the ETERNAL God.

***Was the Word***— Or, existed the Logos. This term should be left untranslated, for the very same reason why the names Jesus and Christ are left untranslated. The first I consider as proper an appellation of the Savior of the world as I do either of the two last. And as it would be highly improper to say, the Deliverer, the Anointed, instead of Jesus Christ, so I deem it improper to say, the Word, instead of the Logos. But as every appellation of the Savior of the world was descriptive of some excellence in his person, nature, or work, so the epithet **λογος**, Logos, which signifies a word spoken, speech, eloquence, doctrine, reason, or the faculty of reasoning, is very properly applied to him, who is the true light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world, John 1:9; who is the fountain of all wisdom; who giveth being, life, light, knowledge, and reason, to all men; who is the grand Source of revelation, who has declared God unto mankind; who spake by the prophets, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, Revelation 19:10; who has illustrated life and immortality by his Gospel, 2 Timothy 1:10; and who has fully made manifest the deep mysteries which lay hidden in the bosom of the invisible God from all eternity, John 1:18.

The apostle does not borrow this mode of speech from the writings of Plato, as some have imagined: he took it from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and from the subsequent style of the ancient Jews. It is true the Platonists make mention of the Logos in this way:—**καθ' ον, αι οντα, τα γενομενα εγενετο**—by whom, eternally existing, all things were made. But as Plato, Pythagoras, Zeno, and others, traveled among the Jews, and conversed with them, it is reasonable to suppose that they borrowed this, with many others of their most important notions and doctrines, from them.

***And the Word was God.***— Or, God was the Logos: therefore no subordinate being, no second to the Most High, but the supreme eternal Jehovah.

**Verse 3. *All things were made by him***— That is, by this Logos. In Genesis 1:1, GOD is said to have created all things: in this verse, Christ is said to have created all things: the same unerring Spirit spoke in Moses and in the evangelists: therefore Christ and the Father are ONE. To say that Christ made all things by a delegated power from God is absurd; because



the thing is impossible. Creation means causing that to exist that had no previous being: this is evidently a work which can be effected only by omnipotence. Now, God cannot delegate his omnipotence to another: were this possible, he to whom this omnipotence was delegated would, in consequence, become GOD; and he from whom it was delegated would cease to be such: for it is impossible that there should be two omnipotent beings.

On these important passages I find that many eminently learned men differ from me: it seems they cannot be of my opinion, and I feel I cannot be of theirs. May He, who is the Light and the Truth, guide them and me into all truth!

**Verse 4. *In him was life***— Many MSS., versions, and fathers, connect this with the preceding verse, thus: All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made. What was made had life in it; but THIS LIFE was the light of men. That is, though every thing he made had a principle of life in it, whether vegetable, animal, or intellectual, yet this, that life or animal principle in the human being, was not the light of men; not that light which could guide them to heaven, for the world by wisdom knew not God, 1 Corinthians 1:21. Therefore, the expression, in him was life, is not to be understood of life natural, but of that life eternal which he revealed to the world, 2 Timothy 1:10, to which he taught the way, John 14:6, which he promised to believers, John 10:28, which he purchased for them, John 6:51, 53, 54, which he is appointed to give them, John 17:2, and to which he will raise them up, John 5:29, because he hath the life in himself, John 5:26. All this may be proved: 1. From the like expressions; 1 John 5:11, This is the promise that God hath given unto us, eternal life, and this life is in his Son: whence he is styled the true God and eternal life, 1 John 5:20; the resurrection and the life, John 11:25; the way, the truth, and the life, John 14:6. 2. From these words, John 1:7, John came to bear witness of this light, that all might believe through him, viz. to eternal life, 1 Timothy 1:16; for so John witnesseth, John 3:15, 36. And hence it follows that this life must be the light of men, by giving them the knowledge of this life, and of the way leading to it. See Whitby on the place. Is there any reference here to Genesis 3:20: And Adam called his wife's name Eve, אָוָּה chava, זֵוָּה, LIFE, because she was the mother of all

living? And was not Jesus that seed of the woman that was to bruise the head of the serpent, and to give life to the world?

**Verse 5. *And the light shineth in darkness***— By darkness here may be understood: 1. The heathen world, Ephesians 5:8. 2. The Jewish people. 3. The fallen spirit of man.

***Comprehended it not.***— *αυτο ου κατελαβεν*, Prevented it not—hindered it not, says Mr. Wakefield, who adds the following judicious note:—"Even in the midst of that darkness of ignorance and idolatry which overspread the world, this light of Divine wisdom was not totally eclipsed: the Jewish nation was a lamp perpetually shining to the surrounding nations; and many bright luminaries, among the heathen, were never wanting in just and worthy notions of the attributes and providence of God's wisdom; which enabled them to shine in some degree, though but as lights in a dark place, 2 Peter 1:19. Compare Acts 14:17; 17:28, 29."

**Verse 6. *Whose name was John.***— This was John the Baptist; see his name and the nature of his office explained, Mark 1:4, and Matthew 3:1-3.

**Verse 7. *That all men through him might believe.***— He testified that Jesus was the true light—the true teacher of the way to the kingdom of glory, and the lamb or sacrifice of God, which was to bear away the sin of the world, John 1:29, and invited men to believe in him for the remission of their sins, that they might receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, John 1:32-34. This was bearing the most direct witness to the light which was now shining in the dark wilderness of Judea; and, from thence, shortly to be diffused over the whole world.

**Verse 9. *Which lighteth every man***— As Christ is the Spring and Fountain of all wisdom, so all the wisdom that is in man comes from him; the human intellect is a ray from his brightness; and reason itself springs from this Logos, the eternal reason. Some of the most eminent rabbins understand Isaiah 60:1, Rise and shine, for thy LIGHT is come, of the Messiah who was to illuminate Israel, and who, they believe, was referred to in that word, Genesis 1:3, And God said, Let there be LIGHT; and there was light. Let a Messiah be provided; and a Messiah was accordingly provided. See Schoettgen.

*That cometh into the world.*— Or, coming into the world-*ερχομενον εις τον κοσμον*: a common phrase among the rabbins, to express every human being. As the human creature sees the light of the world as soon as it is born, from which it had been excluded while in the womb of its parent; in like manner, this heavenly light shines into the soul of every man, to convince of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and it is through this light, which no man brings into the world with him, but which Christ mercifully gives to him on his coming into it, that what is termed conscience among men is produced. No man could discern good from evil, were it not for this light thus supernaturally and graciously restored. There was much light in the law, but this shone only upon the Jews; but the superior light of the Gospel is to be diffused over the face of the whole earth.

The following not only proves what is asserted in this verse, but is also an excellent illustration of it.

The GAYATRI, or holiest verse of the VEDAS, i.e. the ancient Hindoo Scriptures.

“Let us adore the supremacy of that divine Sun, the Godhead who illuminates all, who re-creates all; from whom all proceed; to whom all must return; whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright, in our progress towards his holy seat.”

*The ancient comment.*

“What the sun and light are to this visible world, that are the supreme good and truth to the intellectual and invisible universe; and, as our corporeal eyes have a distinct perception of objects enlightened by the sun, thus our souls acquire certain knowledge by meditating on the light of truth, which emanates from the Being of beings; that is the light by which alone our minds can be directed in the path to blessedness.” Sir Wm. Jones’s works, vol. vi. p. 417.

Sir William observes that the original word Bhargas, which he translates Godhead, consists of three consonants, and is derived from bha, to shine; ram, to delight; and gam, to move:-the Being who is the light, the source of happiness, and the all-pervading energy.

**Verse 10. *He was in the world***— From its very commencement-he governed the universe-regulated his Church-spake by his prophets-and often, as the angel or messenger of Jehovah, appeared to them, and to the patriarchs.

***The world knew him not.***— **αυτον ουκ εγνω**-Did not acknowledge him; for the Jewish rulers knew well enough that he was a teacher come from God; but they did not choose to acknowledge him as such. Men love the world, and this love hinders them from knowing him who made it, though he made it only to make himself known. Christ, by whom all things were made, John 1:3, and by whom all things are continually supported, Colossians 1:16, 17; Hebrews 1:3, has way every where, is continually manifesting himself by his providence and by his grace, and yet the foolish heart of man regardeth it not! See the reason, John 3:19.

**Verse 11. *He came unto his own***— **τα ιδια**-to those of his own family, city, country:-and his own people, **οι ιδιοι**-his own citizens, brethren, subjects.

The Septuagint, Josephus, and Arrian, use these words, **τα ιδιοι** and **οι ιδιοι**, in the different senses given them above.

***Received him not.***— Would not acknowledge him as the Messiah, nor believe in him for salvation.

How very similar to this are the words of Creeshna, (an incarnation of the Supreme Being, according to the theology of the ancient Hindoos!) Addressing one of his disciples, he says: “The foolish, being unacquainted with my supreme and divine nature, as Lord of all things, despise me in this human form; trusting to the evil, diabolic, and deceitful principle within them. They are of vain hope, of vain endeavors, of vain wisdom, and void of reason; whilst men of great minds, trusting to their divine natures, discover that I am before all things, and incorruptible, and serve me with their hearts undiverted by other beings.” See Bhagvat Geeta, p. 79.

To receive Christ is to acknowledge him as the promised Messiah; to believe in him as the victim that bears away the sin of the world; to obey his Gospel, and to become a partaker of his holiness, without which no man, on the Gospel plan, can ever see God.

**Verse 12. *Gave he power***— ἐξουσιαν, Privilege, honor, dignity, or right. He who is made a child of God enjoys the greatest privilege which the Divine Being can confer on this side eternity. Those who accept Jesus Christ, as he is offered to them in the Gospel, have, through his blood, a right to this sonship; for by that sacrifice this blessing was purchased; and the fullest promises of God confirm it to all who believe. And those who are engrafted in the heavenly family have the highest honor and dignity to which it is possible for a human soul to arrive. What an astonishing thought is this! The sinner, who was an heir to all God's curses, has, through the sacrifice of Jesus, a claim on the mercy of the Most High, and a right to be saved! Even justice itself, on the ground of its holy and eternal nature, gives salvation to the vilest who take refuge in this atonement; for justice has nothing to grant, or Heaven to give, which the blood of the Son of God has not merited.

**Verse 13. *Which were born, not of blood***— Who were regenerated, οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, not of bloods—the union of father and mother, or of a distinguished or illustrious ancestry; for the Hebrew language makes use of the plural to point out the dignity or excellence of a thing; and probably by this the evangelist intended to show his countrymen, that having Abraham and Sarah for their parents would not entitle them to the blessings of the new covenant; as no man could lay claim to them, but in consequence of being born of God; therefore, neither the will of the flesh—any thing that the corrupt heart of man could purpose or determine in its own behalf; nor the will of man—any thing that another may be disposed to do in our behalf, can avail here; this new birth must come through the will of God—through his own unlimited power and boundless mercy, prescribing salvation by Christ Jesus alone. It has been already observed that the Jews required circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice, in order to make a proselyte. They allow that the Israelites had in Egypt cast off circumcision, and were consequently out of the covenant; but at length they were circumcised, and they mingled the blood of circumcision with the blood of the paschal lamb, and from this union of bloods they were again made the children of God. See Lightfoot. This was the only way by which the Jews could be made the sons of God; but the evangelist shows them that, under the Gospel dispensation, no person could become a child of God, but by being spiritually regenerated.

**Verse 14. *And the Word was made flesh***— That very person who was in the beginning—who was with God—and who was God, John 1:1, in the fullness of time became flesh—became incarnated by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin. Allowing this apostle to have written by Divine inspiration, is not this verse, taken in connection with John 1:1, an absolute and incontestable proof of the proper and eternal Godhead of Christ Jesus?

***And dwelt among us***— **καὶ ἐσκηώσεν ἐν ἡμῖν**, And tabernacled among us: the human nature which he took of the virgin, being as the shrine, house, or temple, in which his immaculate Deity condescended to dwell. The word is probably an allusion to the Divine Shechinah in the Jewish temple; and as God has represented the whole Gospel dispensation by the types and ceremonies of the old covenant, so the Shechinah in the tabernacle and temple pointed out this manifestation of God in the flesh. The word is thus used by the Jewish writers: it signifies with them a manifestation of the Divine Shechinah.

The original word, **σκηνοῶ**, from **σκία**, a shadow, signifies: 1. To build a booth, tent, or temporary hut, for present shelter or convenience; and does not properly signify a lasting habitation or dwelling place; and is therefore fitly applied to the human nature of Christ, which, like the tabernacle of old, was to be here only for a temporary residence for the eternal Divinity. 2. It signifies to erect such a building as was used on festival occasions, when a man invited and enjoyed the company of his friends. To this meaning of the word, which is a common one in the best Greek writers, the evangelist might allude, to point out Christ's associating his disciples with himself; living, conversing, eating, and drinking with them: so that, while they had the fullest proof of his Divinity by the miracles which he wrought, they had the clearest evidence of his humanity, by his tabernacling among, eating, drinking, and conversing with them. Concerning the various acceptations of the verb **σκηνοῶ** see Raphelius on this verse.

The doctrine of vicarious sacrifice and the incarnation of the Deity have prevailed among the most ancient nations in the world, and even among those which were not favored with the letter of Divine revelation. The Hindoos believe that their god has already become incarnate, not less than nine times, to save the wretched race of man.

On this subject, Creeshna, an incarnation of the supreme God, according to the Hindoo theology, is represented in the Bhagvat Geeta, as thus addressing one of his disciples: “Although I am not in my nature subject to birth or decay, and am the Lord of all created beings, yet, having command over my own nature, I am made evident by my own power; and, as often as there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, I make myself evident; and thus I appear from age to age, for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of virtue.” Geeta, pp. 51, 52.

The following piece, already mentioned, Luke 1:68, translated from the Sanscreeet, found on a stone, in a cave near the ancient city of Gya in the East Indies, is the most astonishing and important of any thing found out of the compass of the Sacred Writings, and a proper illustration of this text.

“The Deity, who is the Lord, the possessor of all, APPEARED in this ocean of natural beings, at the beginning of the Kalee Yoog (the age of contention and baseness.) He who is omnipresent, and everlastingly to be contemplated, the Supreme Being, the eternal ONE, the Divinity worthy to be adored-APPEARED here, with a PORTION of his DIVINE NATURE. Reverence be unto thee in the form of (a) Bood-dha! Reverence be unto the Lord of the earth! Reverence be unto thee, an INCARNATION of the Deity, and the Eternal ONE! Reverence be unto thee, O GOD! in the form of the God of mercy! the dispeller of PAIN and TROUBLE, the Lord of ALL things, the Deity who overcometh the sins of the Kalee Yoog, the guardian of the universe, the emblem of mercy towards those who serve thee! (b) O’M! the possessor of all things, in VITAL FORM! Thou art (c) Brahma, (d) Veeshnoo, and (e) Mahesa! Thou art Lord of the universe! Thou art under the form of all things, movable and immovable, the possessor of the whole! And thus I adore thee! Reverence be unto the BESTOWER of SALVATION, and the ruler of the faculties! Reverence be unto thee, the DESTROYER of the EVIL SPIRIT! O Damordara, (f) show me favor! I adore thee who art celebrated by a thousand names, and under various forms, in the shape of Bood-dha, the God of mercy! Be propitious, O most high God!” Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 284, 285.

***We beheld his glory***— This refers to the transfiguration, at which John was present, in company with Peter and James.

***The glory as of the only begotten***— That is, such a glory as became, or was proper to, the Son of God; for thus the participle **ὡς** should be here understood. There is also here an allusion to the manifestations of God above the ark in the tabernacle: see Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7:89; and this connects itself with the first clause, he tabernacled, or fixed his tent among us. While God dwelt in the tabernacle, among the Jews, the priests saw his glory; and while Jesus dwelt among men his glory was manifested in his gracious words and miraculous acts.

***The only begotten of the Father***— That is, the only person born of a woman, whose human nature never came by the ordinary way of generation; it being a mere creation in the womb of the virgin, by the energy of the Holy Ghost.

***Full of grace and truth.***— Full of favor, kindness, and mercy to men; teaching the way to the kingdom of God, with all the simplicity, plainness, dignity, and energy of truth.

(a) Bood-dha. The name of the Deity, as author of happiness.

(b) O'M. A mystic emblem of the Deity, forbidden to be pronounced but in silence. It is a syllable formed of the Sanscreeet letters a, o o, which in composition coalesce, and make o, and the nasal consonant m. The first letter stands for the Creator, the second for the Preserver, and the third for the Destroyer. It is the same among the Hindoos as יהוה Yehovah is among the Hebrews.

(c) Brahma, the Deity in his creative quality.

(d) Veeshnoo. He who filleth all space: the Deity in his preserving quality.

(e) Mahesa. The Deity in his destroying quality. This is properly the Hindoo Trinity: for these three names belong to the same God. See the notes to the Bhagvat Geeta.

(f) Damordara, or Darmadeve, the Indian god of virtue.



**Verse 15. *Of him***— The glorious personage before mentioned: John the Baptist, whose history was well known to the persons to whom this Gospel came in the beginning, bare witness; and he cried, -being deeply convinced of the importance and truth of the subject, he delivered his testimony with the utmost zeal and earnestness, -saying, This is he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me -for I am no other than the voice of the crier in the wilderness, Isaiah 40:3, the forerunner of the Messiah.

***Was before me.***— Speaking by the prophets, and warning your fathers to repent and return to God, as I now warn you; for he was before me -he was from eternity, and from him I have derived both my being and my ministry.

**Verse 16.** This verse should be put in place of the fifteenth, and the 15th inserted between the 18th and 19th, which appears to be its proper place: thus John's testimony is properly connected. {John 1:15-19}

***And of his fullness***— Of the plenitude of his grace and mercy, by which he made an atonement for sin; and of the plenitude of his wisdom and truth, by which the mysteries of heaven have been revealed, and the science of eternal truth taught, we have all received: all we apostles have received grace or mercy to pardon our sins, and truth to enable us so to write and speak, concerning these things, that those who attend to our testimony shall be unerringly directed in the way of salvation, and with us continue to receive grace upon grace, one blessing after another, till they are filled with all the fullness of God. I believe the above to be the meaning of the evangelist, and think it improper to distract the mind of the reader with the various translations and definitions which have been given of the phrase, grace for grace. It is only necessary to add, that John seems here to refer to the Gospel as succeeding the law: the law was certainly a dispensation both of grace and truth; for it pointed out the gracious design of God to save men by Christ Jesus; and it was at least a most expressive and well-defined shadow of good things to come: but the Gospel, which had now taken place, introduced that plenitude of grace and truth to the whole world, which the law had only shadowed forth to the Jewish people, and which they imagined should have been restrained to themselves alone. In the most gracious economy of God, one dispensation of mercy and truth is designed to make way for, and to be followed by,

another and a greater: thus the law succeeded the patriarchal dispensation, and the Gospel the law; more and more of the plenitude of the grace of the Gospel becomes daily manifest to the genuine followers of Christ; and, to those who are faithful unto death, a heaven full of eternal glory will soon succeed to the grace of the Gospel. To illustrate this point more fully, the following passage in Philo the Jew has been adduced: “God is always sparing of his first blessings or graces, (πρωτας χαριτας,) and afterwards gives other graces upon them, (αντ’ εκεινων,) and a third sort upon the second, and always new ones upon old ones, sometimes of a different kind, and at other times of the same sort.” Vol. i. p. 254, ed. Mang. In the above passage the preposition *αντι* for, is used thrice in the sense of *επι*, upon. To confirm the above interpretation Bp. Pearce produces the following quotations. Ecclus xxvi. 15: *χαρις επι χαριτι γυνη αισχυνηρα*-A modest woman is a grace upon a grace, i.e. a double grace or blessing. Euripides uses the very same phrase with John, where he makes Theoclymenus say to Helena. *χαρις αντι χαριτος ελθετω*, May grace upon grace come to you! Helen v. 1250. ed. Barn.

**Verse 17. *The law was given by Moses***— Moses received the law from God, and through him it was given to the Jews, Acts 7:38.

***But grace and truth***— Which he had already mentioned, and which were to be the subject of the book which he was now writing, came to all mankind through Jesus Christ, who is the mediator of the new covenant, as Moses was of the old: Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; Galatians 3:19. See a fine discourse on this text by Mr. Claude, “Essay on the Composition of a Sermon,” vol. i. p. 119, etc. edit. Lond. 1788.

The law of Moses, however excellent in itself, was little in comparison of the Gospel: as it proceeded from the justice and holiness of God, and was intended to convict men of sin, that the way of the Gospel might be the better prepared, it was a law of rigour, condemnation, and death: Romans 4:15; 2 Corinthians 3:7, 8. It was a law of shadows, types, and figures: Hebrews 10:1, and incapable of expiating sin by its sacrifices: Romans 8:3; Hebrews 7:18, 19; 10:1, 11. But Christ has brought that grace which is opposed to condemnation: Romans 5:15, 20, 21; 8:1; Galatians 3:10; and he is himself the spirit and substance of all those shadows: Colossians 2:19; Hebrews 10:1.

**Jesus Christ.**— JESUS the CHRIST, the Messiah, or anointed prophet, priest, and king, sent from heaven. To what has already been said on the important name Jesus, (See Matthew 1:21, and the places there referred to,) I shall add the following explanation, chiefly taken from Professor Schultens, who has given a better view of the ideal meaning of the root **שע** yasha, than any other divine or critic.

He observes that this root, in its true force, meaning, and majesty, both in Hebrew and Arabic, includes the ideas of amplitude, expansion, and space, and should be translated, he was spacious-open-ample; and, particularly, he possessed a spacious or extensive degree or rank: and is applied, 1. To a person possessing abundance of riches. 2. To one possessing abundant power. 3. To one possessing abundant or extensive knowledge. 4. To one possessing abundance of happiness, beatitude, and glory. Hence we may learn the true meaning of Zechariah 9:9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion-behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is JUST, and having SALVATION: **הושיע**-he is possessed of all power to enrich, strengthen, teach, enlarge, and raise to glory and happiness, them who trust in him. Man by nature is in want and poverty: in abjectness and weakness: in darkness and ignorance: in straits and captivity: in wretchedness and infamy. His Redeemer is called **ישועה** JESUS-he who looses, enlarges, and endows with salvation. 1. He enriches man's poverty: 2. strengthens his weakness: 3. teaches his ignorance: 4. brings him out of straits and difficulties: and 5. raises him to happiness, beatitude, and glory. And the aggregate of these is SALVATION. Hence that saying, His name shall be called JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. See Schultens Origines Hebraeae, p. 15.

**Verse 18. No man hath seen God at any time**— Moses and others heard his voice, and saw the cloud and the fire, which were the symbols of his presence; but such a manifestation of God as had now taken place, in the person of Jesus Christ, had never before been exhibited to the world. It is likely that the word seen, here, is put for known, as in John 3:32; 1 John 3:2, 6, and 3 John 11; and this sense the latter clause of the verse seems to require:-No man, how highly soever favored, hath fully known God, at any time, in any nation or age; the only begotten Son, (see on John 1:14,) who is in the bosom of the Father, who was intimately acquainted with all the

counsels of the Most High, he hath declared him, **εξηγησατο**, hath announced the Divine oracles unto men; for in this sense the word is used by the best Greek writers. See Kypke in loco. 1095

Lying in the bosom, is spoken of in reference to the Asiatic custom of reclining while at meals; the person who was next the other was said to lie in his bosom; and he who had this place in reference to the master of the feast was supposed to share his peculiar regards, and so be in a state of the utmost favor and intimacy with him.

**Verse 19. *And this is the record of John***— He persisted in this assertion, testifying to the Jews that this Jesus was THE CHRIST.

**Verse 20. *He confessed, and denied not; but confessed***— A common mode of Jewish phraseology. John renounces himself, that Jesus may be all in all. Though God had highly honored him, and favored him with peculiar influence in the discharge of his work, yet he considered he had nothing but what he had received, and therefore, giving all praise to his benefactor, takes care to direct the attention of the people to him alone from whom he had received his mercies. He who makes use of God's gifts to feed and strengthen his pride and vanity will be sure to be stripped of the goods wherein he trusts, and fall down into the condemnation of the devil. We have nothing but what we have received; we deserve nothing of what we possess; and it is only God's infinite mercy which keeps us in the possession of the blessings which we now enjoy.

**Verse 21. *Art thou Elias?***— The scribes themselves had taught that Elijah was to come before the Messiah. See Matthew 17:10; and this belief of theirs they supported by a literal construction of Malachi 4:5.

***Art thou that prophet?***— the prophet spoken of by Moses, Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. This text they had also misunderstood: for the prophet or teacher promised by Moses was no other than the Messiah himself. See Acts 3:22. But the Jews had a tradition that Jeremiah was to return to life, and restore the pot of manna, the ark of the covenant, etc., which he had hidden that the Babylonians might not get them. Besides this, they had a general expectation that all the prophets should come to life in the days of the Messiah.

***I am not.***— I am not the prophet which you expect, nor Elijah: though he was the Elijah that was to come; for in the spirit and power of that eminent prophet he came, proclaiming the necessity of reformation in Israel. See Matthew 11:14; 17:10-13.

**Verse 22. *That we may give an answer to them that sent us.***— These Pharisees were probably a deputation from the grand Sanhedrin; the members of which, hearing of the success of the Baptist's preaching, were puzzled to know what to make of him, and seriously desired to hear from himself what he professed to be.

**Verse 23. *I am the voice of one crying***— See the notes on Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:4, 5.

**Verse 25. *Why baptizest thou then?***— Baptism was a very common ceremony among the Jews, who never received a proselyte into the full enjoyment of a Jew's privileges, till he was both baptized and circumcised. But such baptisms were never performed except by an ordinance of the Sanhedrin, or in the presence of three magistrates: besides, they never baptized any Jew or Jewess, nor even those who were the children of their proselytes; for, as all these were considered as born in the covenant, they had no need of baptism, which was used only as an introductory rite. Now, as John had, in this respect, altered the common custom so very essentially, admitting to his baptism the Jews in general, the Sanhedrin took it for granted that no man had authority to make such changes, unless especially commissioned from on high; and that only the prophet, or Elijah, or the Messiah himself; could have authority to act as John did. See the observations at the conclusion of Mark.

**Verse 26. *I baptize with water***— See on Mark 1:8. I use the common form, though I direct the baptized to a different end, viz. that they shall repent of their sins, and believe in the Messiah.

***There standeth one among you***— That is, the person whose forerunner I am is now dwelling in the land of Judea, and will shortly make his appearance among you. Christ was not present when John spoke thus, as may be seen from John 1:29.

**Verse 27. *Is preferred before me***— ὅς ἐμπροσθεν μου γέγονεν, Who was before me. This clause is wanting in BC\*L, four others, the Coptic,

AEthiopic, Slavonic, and two copies of the Itala, and in some of the primitive fathers. Griesbach has left it out of the text. It is likely that it was omitted by the above, because it was found in verses 15 and 30. {John 1:15, 30} At the end of this verse, EG, and ten others, with some copies of the Slavonic, add, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

**Verse 28. *These things were done in Bethabara***— It is very probable that the word Bethany should be inserted here, instead of Bethabara. This reading, in the judgment of the best critics, is the genuine one. The following are the authorities by which it is supported: ABCEGHLMSX, BV, of Matthai, upwards of a hundred others, Syriac, Armenian, Persic, Coptic, Slavonic, Vulgate, Saxon, and all the Itala, with some of the most eminent of the primitive fathers, before the time of Origen, who is supposed to have first changed the reading. Bethabara signifies literally the house of passage, and is thought to be the place where the Israelites passed the river Jordan under Joshua. There was a place called Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, at the foot of the mount of Olives. But there was another of the same name, beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Reuben. It was probably of this that the evangelist speaks; and Origen, not knowing of this second Bethany, altered the reading to Bethabara. See Rosenmuller.

**Verse 29. *The next day***— The day after that on which the Jews had been with John, John 1:19.

***Behold the Lamb of God, etc.***— This was said in allusion to what was spoken Isaiah 53:7. Jesus was the true Lamb or Sacrifice required and appointed by God, of which those offered daily in the tabernacle and temple, Exodus 29:38, 39, and especially the paschal lamb, were only the types and representatives. See Exodus 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 5:7. The continual morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb, under the Jewish law, was intended to point out the continual efficacy of the blood of atonement: for even at the throne of God, Jesus Christ is ever represented as a lamb newly slain, Revelation 5:6. But John, pointing to Christ, calls him emphatically, the Lamb of God:—all the lambs which had been hitherto offered had been furnished by men: this was provided by GOD, as the only sufficient and available sacrifice for the sin of the world. In three essential respects, this lamb differed from those by which it was represented. 1st. It was the Lamb of God; the most excellent, and the most available. 2nd. It

made an atonement for sin: it carried sin away in reality, the others only representatively. 3rd. It carried away the sin of the WORLD, whereas the other was offered only on behalf of the Jewish people. In Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 30, it is said, “The Messiah shall bear the sins of the Israelites.” But this salvation was now to be extended to the whole world.

**Verse 31. *And I knew him not, etc.***— John did not know our Lord personally, and perhaps had never seen him, at the time he spoke the words in John 1:15. Nor is it any wonder that the Baptist should have been unacquainted with Christ, as he had spent thirty years in the hill country of Hebron, and our Lord remained in a state of great privacy in the obscure city of Nazareth, in the extreme borders of Galilee.

***But that he should be made manifest to Israel***— One design of my publicly baptizing was, that he, coming to my baptism, should be shown to be what he is, by some extraordinary sign from heaven.

**Verse 32. *I saw the Spirit descending, etc.***— See the notes on Matthew 3:16, 17.

**Verse 33. *He that sent me-said unto me***— From this we may clearly perceive that John had a most intimate acquaintance with the Divine Being; and received not only his call and mission at first, but every subsequent direction, by immediate, unequivocal inspiration. Who is fit to proclaim Jesus, but he who has continual intercourse with God; who is constantly receiving light and life from Christ their fountain; who bears a steady, uniform testimony to Jesus, even in the presence of his enemies; and who at all times abases himself, that Jesus alone may be magnified! Reformation of manners, and salvation of souls, will accompany such a person’s labors whithersoever he goeth.

**Verse 35. *The next day***— After that mentioned John 1:29.

***Two of his disciples***— One of them was Andrew, John 1:40, and it is very likely that John himself was the other; in every thing in which he might receive honor he studiously endeavors to conceal his own name.

**Verse 36. *And looking upon Jesus***— Attentively beholding, *εμβλεψας*, from *εν*, into, and *βλεπω*, to look-to view with steadfastness and attention. He who desires to discover the glories and excellencies of this

Lamb of God, must thus look on him. At first sight, he appears only as a man among men, and as dying in testimony to the truth, as many others have died. But, on a more attentive consideration, he appears to be no less than God manifest in the flesh, and, by his death, making an atonement for the sin of the world.

***Behold the Lamb of God!***— By this the Baptist designed to direct the attention of his own disciples to Jesus, not only as the great sacrifice for the sin of the world, but also as the complete teacher of heavenly truth.

**Verse 37. *And the two disciples heard him***— And they perfectly understood their master's meaning; in consequence of which, they followed Jesus. Happy they who, on hearing of the salvation of Christ, immediately attach themselves to its author! Delays are always dangerous; and, in this case, often fatal. Reader! hast thou ever had Christ as a sacrifice for thy sin pointed out unto thee? If so, hast thou followed him? If not, thou art not in the way to the kingdom of God. Lose not another moment! Eternity is at hand! and thou art not prepared to meet thy God. Pray that he may alarm thy conscience, and stir up thy soul to seek till thou have found.

**Verse 38. *What seek ye?***— These disciples might have felt some embarrassment in addressing our blessed Lord, after hearing the character which the Baptist gave of him; to remove or prevent this, he graciously accosts them, and gives them an opportunity of explaining themselves to him. Such questions, we may conceive, the blessed Jesus still puts to those who in simplicity of heart desire an acquaintance with him. A question of this nature we may profitably ask ourselves: What seek ye? In this place! In the company you frequent? In the conversation you engage in? In the affairs with which you are occupied? In the works which you perform? Do you seek the humiliation, illumination, justification, edification, or sanctification of your soul? The edification of your neighbor? The good of the Church of Christ? Or, The glory of God? Questions of this nature often put to our hearts, in the fear of God, would induce us to do many things which we now leave undone, and to leave undone many things which we now perform.



**Rabbi**— Teacher. Behold the modesty of these disciples—we wish to be scholars, we are ignorant—we desire to be taught; we believe thou art a teacher come from God.

**Where dwellest thou?**— That we may come and receive thy instructions.

**Verse 39. Come and see.**— If those who know not the salvation of God would come at the command of Christ, they should soon see that with him is the fountain of life, and in his light they should see light. Reader, if thou art seriously inquiring where Christ dwelleth, take the following for answer: He dwells not in the tumult of worldly affairs, nor in profane assemblies, nor in worldly pleasures, nor in the place where drunkards proclaim their shame, nor in carelessness and indolence. But he is found in his temple, wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, in secret prayer, in self-denial, in fasting, in self-examination. He also dwells in the humble, contrite spirit, in the spirit of faith, of love, of forgiveness, of universal obedience; in a word, he dwells in the heaven of heavens, whither he graciously purposes to bring thee, if thou wilt come and learn of him, and receive the salvation which he has bought for thee by his own blood.

**The tenth hour**— Generally supposed to be about what we call four o'clock in the afternoon. According to John 11:9, the Jews reckoned twelve hours in the day; and of course each hour of the day, thus reckoned, must have been something longer or shorter, according to the different times of the year in that climate. The sixth hour with them answered to our twelve o'clock, as appears from what Josephus says in his life, chap. liv. That on the Sabbath day it was the rule for the Jews to go to dinner at the sixth hour, (εκτη ὥρα.) The Romans had the same way of reckoning twelve hours in each of their days. Hence what we meet with in Hor. lib. ii. sat. vi. l. 34: ante secundam significat, as we should express it, before eight o'clock. And when, in lib. i. sat. vi. l. 122, he says, ad quartam jaceo, he means that he lay in bed till ten o'clock. See Bishop Pearce on this place. Dr. Macknight, however, is of opinion that the evangelist is to be understood as speaking of the Roman hour, which was ten o'clock in the morning; and as the evangelist remarks, they abode with him that day, it implies that there was a considerable portion of time spent with our Lord, in which, by his conversation, he removed all their scruples, and convinced

them that he was the Messiah. But, had it been the Jewish tenth hour, it would have been useless to remark their abiding with him that day, as there were only two hours of it still remaining. Harmony, vol. i. p. 52.

**Verse 41. *Findeth his own brother Simon***— Every discovery of the Gospel of the Son of God produces benevolence, and leads those to whom it is made to communicate it to others. Those who find Jesus find in him a treasure of wisdom and knowledge, through which they may not only become rich themselves, but be instruments, in the hand of God, of enriching others. These disciples, having tasted the good word of Christ, were not willing to eat their bread alone, but went and invited others to partake with them. Thus the knowledge of Christ became diffused—one invited another to come and see: Jesus received all, and the number of disciples was increased, and the attentive hearers were innumerable. Every man who has been brought to an acquaintance with God should endeavor to bring, at least, another with him; and his first attention should be fixed upon those of his own household.

**Verse 42. *Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.***— *πετρος* signifies a stone, or fragment of a rock. The reason why this name was given to Simon, who was ever afterwards called Peter, may be seen in the notes on Matthew 16:18, 19, and particularly in Luke, at the end of chap 9. {Luke 9:62}

**Verse 43. *Philip***— This apostle was a native of Bethsaida in Galilee. Eusebius says he was a married man, and had several daughters. Clemens Alexandrinus mentions it as a thing universally acknowledged that it was this apostle who, when commanded by our Lord to follow him, said, Let me first go and bury my father, Matthew 8:21, 22. Theodoret says he preached in the two Phrygias; and Eusebius says he was buried in Phrygia Pacatiana. He must not be confounded with Philip the deacon, spoken of Acts 6:5.

**Verse 45. *Nathanael***— This apostle is supposed to be the same with Bartholomew, which is very likely, for these reasons 1. That the evangelists who mention Bartholomew say nothing of Nathanael; and that St. John, who speaks of Nathanael, says nothing of Bartholomew. 2. No notice is taken any where of Bartholomew's vocation, unless his and that of Nathanael mentioned here be the same. 3. The name of Bartholomew is

not a proper name; it signifies the son of Ptolomy; and Nathanael might have been his own name. 4. St. John seems to rank Nathanael with the apostles, when he says that Peter and Thomas, the two sons of Zebedee, Nathanael, and two other disciples, being gone a fishing, Jesus showed himself to them, John 21:2-4.

*Moses in the law*— See Genesis 3:16; 22:18; 49:10; Deuteronomy 18:18.

*And the prophets*— See Isaiah 4:2; 7:14; 9:5; 40:10; 53:1, etc.; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:14, 15; Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24; Daniel 9:24; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 6:12; 9:9; 12:10.

**Verse 46.** *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*— Bp. Pearce supposes that the **τι αγαθον** of the evangelist has some particular force in it: for, in Jeremiah 33:14, God says, I will perform that good thing which I promised, etc.; and this, in Jeremiah 33:15 is explained to mean, his causing the branch of righteousness (i.e. the Messiah) to grow up unto David, from whom Jesus was descended: in this view, Nathanael's question seems to imply, that not Nazareth, but Bethlehem, was to be the birth-place of the Messiah, according to what the chief priests and scribes had determined, Matthew 2:4-6. If this conjecture be not thought solid, we may suppose that Nazareth, at this time, was become so abandoned that no good could be expected from any of those who dwelt in it, and that its wickedness had passed into a proverb: Can any thing good be found in Nazareth? Or, that the question is illiberal, and full of national prejudice.

*Come and see.*— He who candidly examines the evidences of the religion of Christ will infallibly become a believer. No history ever published among men has so many external and internal proofs of authenticity as this has. A man should judge of nothing by first appearances, or human prejudices. Who are they who cry out, The Bible is a fable? Those who have never read it, or read it only with the fixed purpose to gainsay it. I once met with a person who professed to disbelieve every tittle of the New Testament, a chapter of which, he acknowledged, he had never read. I asked him, had he ever read the Old? He answered, No! And yet this man had the assurance to reject the whole as an imposture! God has mercy on those whose ignorance leads them to form prejudices against the truth; but he confounds those who take them up through envy and malice, and endeavor to communicate them to others.

**Verse 47. *Behold an Israelite indeed***— A worthy descendant of the patriarch Jacob, who not only professes to believe in Israel's God, but who worships him in sincerity and truth, according to his light.

***In whom is no guile!***— Deceitfulness ever has been, and still is, the deeply marked characteristic of the Jewish people. To find a man, living in the midst of so much corruption, walking in uprightness before his Maker, was a subject worthy the attention of God himself. Behold this man! and, while you see and admire, imitate his conduct.

**Verse 48. *Whence knowest thou me?***— He was not yet acquainted with the divinity of Christ, could not conceive that he could search his heart, and therefore asks how he could acquire this knowledge of him, or who had given him that character. It is the comfort of the sincere and upright, that God knows their hearts; and it should be the terror of the deceitful and of the hypocrite, that their false dealing is ever noticed by the all-seeing eye of God.

***Under the fig tree***— Probably engaged in prayer with God, for the speedy appearing of the salvation of Israel; and the shade of this fig tree was perhaps the ordinary place of retreat for this upright man. It is not A fig tree, but **την συκην**, THE fig tree, one particularly distinguished from the others. There are many proofs that the Jewish rabbins chose the shade of trees, and particularly the fig tree, to sit and study under. See many examples in Schoettgen. How true is the saying, The eyes of the Lord are through all the earth, beholding the evil and the good! Wheresoever we are, whatsoever we are about, may a deep conviction of this truth rest upon our hearts, Thou God seest ME!

**Verse 49. *Rabbi***— That is, Teacher! and so this word should be translated.

***Thou art the Son of God***— The promised Messiah.

***Thou art the King of Israel.***— The real descendant of David, who art to sit on that spiritual throne of which the throne of David was the type.

**Verse 50. *Because I said-I saw thee, etc.***— As thou hast credited my Divine mission on this simple proof, that I saw thee when and where no human eye, placed where mine was, could see thee, thy faith shall not rest

merely upon this, for thou shalt see greater things than these—more numerous and express proofs of my eternal power and Godhead.

**Verse 51. *Verily, verily***— Amen, amen. The doubling of this word probably came from this circumstance: that it was written both in Hebrew אמת and in Greek αμην, signifying, it is true.

***Heaven open***— This seems to be a figurative expression: 1. Christ may be understood by this saying to mean, that a clear and abundant revelation of God's will should be now made unto men; that heaven itself should be laid as it were open, and all the mysteries which had been shut up and hidden in it from eternity, relative to the salvation and glorification of man; should be now fully revealed. 2. That by the angels of God ascending and descending, is to be understood, that a perpetual intercourse should now be opened between heaven and earth, through the medium of Christ, who was God manifested in the flesh. Our blessed Lord is represented in his mediatorial capacity as the ambassador of God to men; and the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man, is a metaphor taken from the custom of despatching couriers or messengers from the prince to his ambassador in a foreign court, and from the ambassador back to the prince. This metaphor will receive considerable light when compared with 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20: God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself:—We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. The whole concerns of human salvation shall be carried on, from henceforth, through the Son of man; and an incessant intercourse be established between heaven and earth. Some have illustrated this passage by the account of Jacob's vision, Genesis 28:12. But though that vision may intimate that God had established at that time a communication between heaven and earth, through the medium of angels, yet it does not appear that our Lord's saying here has any reference to it; but that it should be understood as stated above.

What a glorious view does this give us of the Gospel dispensation! It is heaven opened to earth; and heaven opened on earth. The Church militant and the Church triumphant become one, and the whole heavenly family, in both, see and adore their common Lord. Neither the world nor the Church is left to the caprices of time or chance. The Son of man governs as he

upholds all. Wherever we are praying, studying, hearing, meditating, his gracious eye is upon us. He notes our wants, our weakness, and our petitions; and his eye affects his heart. Let us be without guile, deeply, habitually sincere, serious, and upright; and then we may rest assured, that not only the eye, but the hand, of our Lord shall be ever upon us for good. Happy the man whose heart can rejoice in the reflection, Thou God seest me!

## 1. TESTIMONIES

### CONCERNING THE LOGOS, OR WORD OF GOD;

*From the Chaldee Targums.*

The person here styled the Logos is called **דבר יהוה** *debar yehovah*, the Word of Jehovah, Genesis 15:1, 4; 1 Samuel 3:7, 21; 15:10; 1 Kings 13:9, 17; 19:9, 15; Psalm 107:20; and the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases, frequently substitute **מִמְרָא דִּי** *meymra d'yay*, the word of the Lord, for **יהוה** Jehovah himself. Thus the Jerusalem Targum in Genesis 3:22, and both that and the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, in Genesis 19:24. And Onkelos, on Genesis 3:8, for the voice of the Lord God, has, the voice of the WORD of the Lord. The Jerusalem Targum on Genesis 1:27, for, And God created man, has, The WORD of Jehovah created, etc. Compare Targum Jonathan, on Isaiah 45:12; 48:13; Jeremiah 27:5. And on Genesis 22:14, that of Jerusalem says, Abraham invoked, **בשם מִמְרָא דִּי** *beshem meymra d'yay*, in the name of the WORD of the Lord, and said, THOU art Jehovah. So Onkelos, Genesis 28:20, 21, If the WORD of Jehovah will be my help-then the WORD of Jehovah shall be my God. See Parkhurst under the word **λογος**.

After a serious reading of the Targums, it seems to me evident that the Chaldee term **מִמְרָא** *meymra*, or WORD, is taken personally, in a multitude of places in them. When Jonathan ben Uzziel speaks of the Supreme Being as doing or saying any thing, he generally represents him as performing the whole by this Meymra, or WORD, which he considers, not as a speech or word spoken, but as a person distinct from the Most High, and to whom he attributes all the operations of the Deity. To attempt to

give the word any other meaning than this, in various places throughout the Targums, would, in my opinion, be flat opposition to every rule of construction; though, like the Greek word *λογος*, it has other acceptations in certain places. See Lightfoot.

2. Testimonies concerning the personality, attributes, and influence of the WORD of GOD, taken from the Zend Avesta, and other writings attributed to Zoroaster.

“Let thy terrible WORD which I pronounce, O Ormusd! elevate itself on high. May it be great before thee, and satisfy my desires!” ZEND AVESTA, vol. i. Vendidad Sade, p. 104.

Zoroaster consulted Ormusd, and spoke thus to him: “O Ormusd, absorbed in excellence, just Judge of the world, pure, who existest by thy own power, what is that great WORD given by God, that living and powerful WORD, O Ormusd, tell me plainly, which existed before the heavens, before the water, before the earth, before the flocks, before the fire, the CHILD of ORMUSD, before men, before the whole race of existing beings, before all the benefits, and before all the pure germs given by Ormusd?” Ormusd replied: “Pronounce that great WORD well, That WORD which existed before heaven was made, before the water, before the earth, before brute animals, before men, and before the holy angels (amschaspands.) I pronounced that word with majesty, and all the pure beings which are, and which have been, and which shall be, were formed. I continue to pronounce it in its utmost extent, and abundance is multiplied.” Ibid. p. 138, 139.

“By his original WORD, Ormusd created the world and vanquished Ahriman, the genius of evil.” Ibid. p. 140, not. 1.

“The saints in heaven and earth pronounce the sacred WORD:-under the character of Honover (i.e. pure desire) it is worshipped.” Ibid. 141.

“Ormusd, together with the luminous and excellent WORD, is invoked, to defend the true worshipper from the oppression of evil spirits.” Ibid. p. 174.

“Man is healed by the supreme word.” Ibid. p. 324.

“By this WORD all defiled places are rendered pure: fire, water, earth, trees, flocks, men, women, stars, moon, sun, and the primeval light, with all the blessings given by Ormusd, are purified by it.” Ibid. p. 368.

The word of Ormusd is termed, “Ezem bate, I AM;” and is represented as “putting every thing in a safe state-as the author of abundance; the source of all productions; the holy, pure, precious, and desirable word, which watches over all the creation.” Ibid. Jescht Rashne Rast. vol. ii. p. 239.

It is called, “The excellent, elevated, and victorious word: the source of light; the principle of action, which smites and triumphs; which gives health; discomfits wicked men and spirits; which exists through all the world, destroying the evil, and fulfilling the desires of the good.” Ibid. Jescht of Ormusd, vol. ii. p. 145.

The Word is invoked as-”The pure word-the most pure word: the strong-the most strong: the extended and ancient-the most extended and the most ancient: the victorious-the most victorious: the salutary-the most salutary: which gives health-is the abundant source of health, and cures wounds and diseases of all kinds.” Ibid. Jescht of Ardebehesht, vol. ii. p. 157.

It is termed, “The creator, or creating principle.” Ibid. Jescht of Farvardin, vol. ii. p. 252.

“Prayer is made to the soul of the excellent WORD, the body of which is supremely luminous.” Ibid. p. 262.

“Through the whole government of Ormusd, men are commanded to invoke that most pure and excellent WORD.” Ibid. p. 264.

That the word, in the above places, does not mean the sacred books of the Parsees, it is expressly said, that-”The law of the Mazdejesnans (the disciples of Zoroaster) comes from this superexcellent Word.” Ibid. Si-Rouze; Mansrespand, p. 323, 354.

“The law is the body under which the primitive WORD, which created the world, is manifested. The primitive WORD therefore is worshipped in reading and reverencing that law; and the effects produced in the soul by it are no less than a new creation, in some sort similar to that which this omnific Word formed in the beginning.” Ibid. vol. ii. p. 595.



“The WORD proceeds from the first principle, time without bounds, i.e. eternity: it is before all created beings, and by it all the creation of God has been formed.” Ibid. vol. ii. p. 592.

I find a word of the same import, used in exactly the same sense, in the Zend Avesta, attributed to the ancient Persian lawgiver, Zoroaster.

One might suppose that Mohammed had the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel in his eye when he wrote ver. 33, of Surat xix., of his Koran: —  
[A]

Zalyka Isaiah ibno Mareema Kawlohhokki, This is Jesus the Son of Mary, the WORD of TRUTH.-Some may understand the Arabic differently: This is a true word, that Jesus is the son of Mary.

### 3. TESTIMONIES

#### CONCERNING THE LOGOS OR WORD OF GOD;

*From Philo Judaeus.*

After I had begun my collections from Philo Judaeus relative to the Logos, I casually met with a work of the late very learned Mr. Jacob Bryant, entitled, The sentiments of Philo Judaeus concerning the **λογος**, or WORD of GOD. 8vo. Cambridge, 1797. From this valuable tract I shall make a few extracts, and beg leave to refer the reader to the pamphlet itself.

“Philo Judaeus speaks at large, in many places, of the word of God, the second person, which he mentions as (**δευτερος θεος**) the second divinity, the great cause of all things, and styles him, as Plato, as well as the Jews had done before, the LOGOS. Of the Divine Logos, or Word, he speaks in many places, and maintains at large the divinity of the second person, and describes his attributes in a very precise and copious manner, styling him: (a) **τον δευτερον θεον ος εστιν εκεινου (θεου πρωτου) λογος**, the second Deity, who is the Word of the Supreme God; (b) **πρωτογονον υιον**, his first begotten Son; (c) **εικων θεου**, the Image of God; and (d) **ποιμην της ιερας αγελης**, The shepherd of his holy flock. In his treatise upon Creation, he speaks of the WORD, as (e) the Divine operator, by whom all things were disposed; and mentions him as (f)

superior to the angels and all created beings, and the image and likeness of God, and says that this image of the true God was esteemed the same as God-(g) **ὡς αὐτον (θεον) κατανοουσι.** (h) This LOGOS, the WORD of GOD, says he, is superior to all the world, and more ancient; being the producer of all that was produced. (i) The eternal Word of the everlasting God is the sure and fixed foundation, upon which all things depend. He mentions man as in need of redemption, and says, What intelligent person, who views mankind engaged in unworthy and wicked pursuits, but (k) must be grieved to the heart, and call upon that only Savior God, that these crimes may be extenuated, and that, by a ransom and price of redemption being given for his soul, it may again obtain its freedom! It pleased God therefore to appoint his LOGOS to be a mediator. (l) To his WORD the chief and most ancient of all in heaven, the great Author of the world gave this especial gift, that he should stand as a medium (or intercessor) between the Creator and the created; and he is accordingly the advocate for all mortals. The same (m) WORD is the intercessor for man, who is always tending to (n) corruption: and he is the appointed messenger of God, the governor of all things, to man in subjection to him. (o) He, therefore, exhorts every person, who is able, to exert himself in the race which he is to run, to bend his course without (p) remission to the Divine WORD above, who is the fountain of all wisdom; that, by drinking at this sacred spring, he, instead of death, may obtain the reward of everlasting life. He repeats, continually, that the LOGOS is the express image of God.

(q) The WORD, by which the world was made, is the image of the supreme Deity. (r) As we perceive the sun's light, though the sun itself is not seen; and behold the brightness of the moon, though its orb may not appear to the eye; so men look up to, and acknowledge, the likeness of God, in his minister the LOGOS, whom they esteem as God. He attempts to describe his nature by representing him as, (s) not uncreated, like God; nor yet created, as man; but of a Divine substance. (t) For the WORD of God, which is above all the host of heaven, cannot be comprehended by human wisdom, having nothing in his nature that is perceptible to mortal sense. For, being the image of God, and the eldest of all intelligent beings, he is seated immediately next to the one God, without any interval of separation. This, in the language of Scripture, is sitting on the right hand of God. He adds, (u) For not being liable to any voluntary or involuntary

change, or falling off, he has God for his lot and portion, and his residence is in God. The like is mentioned in another place, where he is represented again as sinless, and as the great High Priest of the world. (v) We maintain, that by the (true) High Priest is not meant a man, but the Divine WORD, who is free from all voluntary and involuntary transgressions; being of heavenly parentage, born of God, and of that Divine Wisdom by which all things were produced. He speaks to the same purpose in another place, there he makes mention of the WORD. (w) **εν ω και αρχιερευς, ο πρωτογονος αυτου (θεου) θειος λογος**, In which presides that High Priest, the holy WORD, the first-born of God; at other times styled, **πρεσβυτατος υιος θεου**, the Son of God, antecedent to all creation. (x) **τουτον μεν γαρ πρεσβυτατον υιον ο των οντων ανετειλε πατηρ, ον ετερωθι πρωτογονον ωνομασε**. It is manifest that every attribute which the sacred writers have given to Christ, in his mediatorial capacity, Philo has attributed to him in his Divine character, antecedent to creation, page 15-22.

Mr. Bryant thinks that Philo derived all this knowledge, concerning the Logos, from the apostles, and the works and conversation of Christian writers; for it is very probable that Philo was contemporary with our Lord himself. Mr. B. is so well satisfied that Philo derived all this knowledge from these sources that he goes on to ask: —

“Whence else could he have obtained so many terms which bear such an analogy with the expressions and doctrines in the apostolical writings? Such are **υιος θεου, λογος πρωτογονος, πρεσβυτατος, αιδιος, λογος αρχιερευς, μεσος, μεθοριος, ικετης του θνητου, δημιουργος, ποιμην της λερας αγελης, ὑπαρχος θεου, σφραγισ, εικων τεου, φως, πνευμα θεου, πνευμα πανσοφον**. We read farther concerning redemption, and-**λυτρα και σωστρα**, the price and ransom for the soul, **αντι θανατου ζωην αιδιον**, and **νους ανθρωπου ναος θεου**. To these other instances might be added equally significant; few of which are to be found in the Greek version, or in any Jewish doctrines, at least in the acceptation given. They were obtained either from the conversation, or from the writings, of the first Christians; or rather from both.” Page 202.

At p. 105, Mr. B. gives “A recapitulation of the characters and attributes of the Logos, with the collateral evidence from Scripture.” This, with some other matters of a collateral import, he argues in 52 particulars, from which

I have extracted the following, as being most closely allied to the subject, inserting the original words along with the translation. The references, in all cases, are to Dr. Mangey's edition of Philo, 2 vols. fol. Lond. 1742.

#### **4. A LIST OF SOME OF THE PARTICULAR TERMS AND DOCTRINES FOUND IN PHILO, WITH PARALLEL PASSAGES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

1. The Logos is the Son of God-**υιος θεου**. Deuteronomy Agric. vol. i. p. 308; Deuteronomy Profug. ib. p. 562: compare Mark 1:1; Luke 4:41; John 1:34; Acts 8:37.
2. The second divinity-**δευτερος θεος λογος**. Fragm. vol. ii. p. 625: comp. John 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:24.
3. The first-begotten of God-**λογος πρωτογονος**. Deuteronomy Somniis, vol. i. p. 653: comp. Hebrews 1:6; Colossians 1:15.
4. The image of God-**εικων του θεου**. Deuteronomy Mundi Opific. vol. i. p. 6, 414, 419, 656. comp. Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:4.
5. Superior to angels-**υπερανω παντων (αγγελων) λογος θειος**. Deuteronomy Profugis, vol. i. p. 561: comp. Hebrews 1:4, 6.
6. Superior to all the world-**ο λογος-υπερανω παντος εστι**. Deuteronomy Leg. Allegor. vol. i. p. 121: comp. Hebrews 2:8.
7. By whom the world was created-**τον θειον λογον τον ταυτα διακομησαντα**. Deuteronomy Mund. Opif. vol. i. p. 4: comp. John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:2, 10.
8. The great substitute of God-**υπαρχος του θεου**. Deuteronomy Agricult. vol. i. p. 308: comp. John 1:3; 17:4; Ephesians 3:9; Philippians 2:7.
9. The light of the world-**φως κοσμου**: and intellectual sun-**ηλιος νοητος**. Deuteronomy Somniis, vol. i. p. 6, 414, 632, 633: comp. John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 1Pet 2:9.
10. Who only can see God-**ω μονω τον θεον εξεστι καθοραν**. Deuteronomy Confus. Linguar. vol. i. p. 418: comp. John 1:18; 6:46.

11. Who resides in God-**εν αυτω μονω κατοικησει**. Deuteronomy Profug. vol. i. p. 561: comp. John 1:1, 18; 14:11.
12. The most ancient of God's works, and before all things-**πρεσβυτατος των οσα γεγονε**. Deuteronomy Confus. Ling. vol. i. p. 427; Deuteronomy Leg. Allegor. ib. p. 121: comp. John 1:2; 17:5, 24; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 1:2.
13. Esteemed the same as God-**λογον ως αυτον (θεον) κατανοουσι**. Deuteronomy Somniis, vol. i. p. 656: comp. Mark 2:7; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6.
14. The Logos is eternal-**ο αιδιος λογος**. Deuteronomy Plant. Noae, vol. i. p. 332, and vol. ii. p. 604: comp. John 12:34; 2 Timothy 1:9; 4:18; Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 10:6.
15. Beholds all things-**οξυδερκεστατος, ως παντα εφοραν ειναι ικανος**. Deuteronomy Leg. Allegor. vol. i. p. 121: comp. Hebrews 4:12, 13; Revelation 2:23.
16. He unites, supports, preserves, and perfects the world-**ο τε γαρ του οντος λογος, δεσμος ων των απαντων-συνεχει τα μερη παντα, και σφιγγει-περιεχει τα ολα, και πεπληρωκεν**. Deuteronomy Prof. vol. i. p. 562; Fragm. vol. ii. p. 655: comp. John 3:35; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3.
17. Nearest to God without any separation-**ο εγγυτατω μηδενος οντος μεθοριου διαστηματος**. Deuteronomy Profug. vol. i. p. 561: comp. John 1:18; 10:30; 14:11; 17:11.
18. Free from all taint of sin, voluntary or involuntary-**ανευ τροπης εκουσιου-και της ακουσιου**. Deuteronomy Profug. vol. i. p. 561: comp. John 8:46; Hebrews 7:26; 9:14; 1 Peter 2:22.
19. Who presides over the imperfect and weak-**ουτος γαρ ημων των ατελων αν ειη θεος**. Deuteronomy Leg. Allegor. vol. i. p. 128: comp. Matthew 11:5; Luke 5:32; 1 Timothy 1:15.
20. The Logos, the fountain of wisdom-**λογον θειον, ος σοφιας εστι πηγη**. Deuteronomy Profug. vol. i. p. 560, 566: comp. John 4:14; John 7:38; 1 Corinthians 1:24; Colossians 2:3.

21. A messenger sent from God-**πρεσβευτης του ηγεμονος προς το υπηκοον**. Quis Rer. Div. Haeres. vol. i. p. 501: comp. John 5:36; 8:29, 42; 1 John 4:9.
22. The advocate for mortal man-**ικετης μεν εστι του θνητου**. Quis Rer. Div. Haer. vol. i. p. 501: comp. John 14:16; 17:20; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25.
23. He ordered and disposed of all things-**διειλε και διενειμε παντα**. Ib. p. 506: comp. Colossians 1:15, 16; Hebrews 11:3.
24. The shepherd of God's flock-**τον ορθον αυτου λογον,-ος την επιμελειαν της ιερας ταυτης αγελης**. Deuteronomy Agricul. vol. i. p. 308: comp. John 10:14; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25.
25. Of the power and royalty of the Logos-**ο του ηγεμονος λογος-και βασιλικη δυναμις αυτου**. Deuteronomy Profug. vol. i. p. 561: comp. 1 Corinthians 15:25; Ephesians 1:21, 22; Hebrews 1:2, 3; Revelation 17:14.
28. The Logos is the physician, who heals all evil-**τον αγγελον (ος εστι λογος) ωσπερ ιατρον κακων**. Deuteronomy Leg. Allegor. vol. i. p. 122: comp. Luke 4:18; 7:21; 1 Peter 2:24; James 1:21.
27. The Logos is the seal of God-**ο δε-εστιν η σφραγισ**. Deuteronomy Profug. vol. i. pp. 547, 548; Deuteronomy Plant. Noae, ib. p. 332: comp. John 6:27; Ephesians 1:13; Hebrews 1:3.
28. The sure refuge of those who seek him-**εφ' ον πρωτον καταφυγειν-ωφελιμωτατον**. Deuteronomy Profug. ib. p. 560: comp. Matthew 11:28; 1 Peter 2:25.
29. Of heavenly food distributed by the Logos equally to all who seek it-**την ουρανιον τροφην ψυχης**. Quis Rer. Divin. Haer. vol. i. p. 499: comp. Matthew 5:6; 7:7; 13:10; 24:14; 28:19; Romans 10:12, 18.
30. Of men's forsaking their sins, and obtaining spiritual freedom by the Logos-**ελευθερια της ψυχης** Deuteronomy Cong. Quaer. Erud. Grat. vol. i. p. 534; Deuteronomy Prof. ib. pp. 561, 563: comp. John 8:36; 1 Corinthians 7:22; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1, 13.
31. Of men's being freed by the Logos from all corruption, and entitled to immortality-**ο ιερος λογος ετιμησε, γερας εξαιρετον δους, κληρον**

αθανατον, την εν αφθαρτω γενει ταξιν. Deuteronomy Cong. Quær. Erud. Grat. vol. i. p. 535: comp. Romans 8:21; 1 Corinthians 15:52, 53; 1 Peter 1:3, 4.

32. The Logos mentioned by Philo, not only as υιος θεου, the Son of God; but also, αγαπητον τεκνον, his beloved Son. Deuteronomy Leg. Allegor. vol. i. p. 129: comp. Matthew 3:17; Luke 9:36; Colossians 1:13; 2 Peter 1:17.

33. The just man advanced by the Logos to the presence of his Creator-τω αυτω λογω-ιδρυσας πλησιον εαυτου. Deuteronomy Sacrificiis, vol. i. p. 165: comp. John 6:37, 44; 12:26; 14:6.

34. The Logos, the true high priest-αρχιερευς, ο πρωτογονος αυτου θειος λογος. Deuteronomy Somniis, vol. i. p. 653; Deuteronomy Profug. ib. p. 562: comp. John 1:41; 8:46; Acts 4:27; Hebrews 4:14; 7:26.

35. The Logos in his mediatorial capacity-λογος αρχιερευς μεθοριος: of whom he says, θαυμαζω και τον μετα σπουδης απνευστι δραμοντα συντονως ιερων λογον, ινα στη μεσος των τεθνηκοτων και των ζωντων. "I am astonished to see the Holy Logos running with so much speed and earnestness, that he may stand between the living and the dead." Quis Rer. Divinar. Haeres. vol. i. p. 501: comp. 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:11, 12, 24.

These testimonies are truly astonishing: and if we allow, as some contend, that Philo was not acquainted either with the disciples of our Lord, or the writings of the New Testament, we shall be obliged to grant that there must have been some measure of Divine inspiration in that man's mind, who could, in such a variety of cases, write so many words and sentences, so exactly corresponding to those of the evangelists and apostles.

5. Testimonies concerning a Trinity among the Chinese, and concerning the Word of God.

Among the ancient Chinese characters which have been preserved, we find the following [Chinese], like the Greek delta, and since written [Chinese]. According to the Chinese Dictionary Kang-hi, this character signifies union. According to Choueouen, a celebrated work, [Chinese] is three united in one. The Lieou chou tsing hoen, which is a rational and learned

explanation of ancient characters, says: “[Chinese] signifies intimate union, harmony, the chief good of man, of the heaven, and of the earth: it is the union of three.”

The book *Se-hi* says, “Formerly the emperor made a solemn sacrifice every three years to the Spirit Trinity in Unity.” [Chinese] *ehin san Y*.

The word *Tao* in ordinary discourse signifies rule, law, wisdom, truth, way, word. In the text of *Lao tse* it signifies the Divinity. “*Tao* (says he) is an abyss of perfections which comprehends all beings. The *Tao* which can be described is not the eternal *Tao*. The *Tao* is its own rule and model. The *Tao* preserves the heavens, and sustains the earth. It is so elevated that none can reach it; so deep that none can fathom it; so immense that it contains the universe; and, notwithstanding, it is complete in the smallest things.”

“He who is as visible, and yet cannot be seen, is denominated *lieou* [Chinese]; he who can be heard, and yet speaks not to the ears, *hi*; he who is as tangible, and yet cannot be felt, is named *ouci*: in vain do you consult your senses concerning these three; your reason alone can discourse of them, and it will tell you that they are but one: above, there is no light; below, there is no darkness. He is eternal. There is no name which can designate him. He bears no similitude to any created thing. He is an image without form; and a form without matter. His light is encompassed with darkness. If you look upwards, you cannot see his commencement: if you follow him, you cannot discover his end. What the *Tao* has always been, such he continues to be: for he is eternal, and the commencement of wisdom.”

One of the missionaries at Peking, who wrote the letter from which I have made the above extracts, takes it for granted that the mystery of the Trinity was known among the ancient Chinese, and that the character [Chinese] was its symbol. *Lettre sur les Caracteres Chinois*, 4to. Bruxelles, 1773.

It is remarkable that Moses and the prophets, the ancient Chaldee Targumists, the author or authors of the *Zend Avesta*, Plato and the first philosophers of Greece, Philo the Jew, John and the apostles, and perhaps even Mohammed himself, should all so perfectly coincide in their ideas



concerning a glorious person in the Godhead! This must have been more than the effect of accident. Moses and the prophets received this Divine doctrine from God himself: it was afterwards confirmed to the apostles by Divine inspiration; and ancient philosophers and lawgivers borrowed from both.

## CHAPTER 2.

*The miracle at Cana in Galilee, where our Lord changed water into wine, 1-11. He goes to Capernaum, 12. He purges the temple at the feast of the passover, 13-17. The Jews require a miracle, as a proof that he had authority to do these things, 18. In answer he refers to his own death and resurrection, 19-22. Many believe on him while at the feast of the passover, to whom Jesus would not trust himself, 23-25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1. *Cana of Galilee***— This was a small city in the tribe of Asher, Joshua 19:28, and by saying this was Cana of Galilee, the evangelist distinguishes it from another Cana, which was in the tribe of Ephraim, in the Samaritan country. See Joshua 16:8; 17:9.

Some suppose that the third day, mentioned here, refers to the third day of the marriage feast: such feasts lasting among the Jews seven days. See Judges 14:12, 17, 18, and Bishop Pearce.

***The mother of Jesus was there***— Some of the ancients have thought that this was the marriage of John the evangelist, who is supposed to have been a near relative of our Lord. See the sketch of his life prefixed to these notes.

**Verse 2. *And both Jesus was called, and his disciples***— There are several remarkable circumstances here. 1. This was probably the first Christian wedding that was ever in the world.

2. The great Author of the Christian religion, with his disciples, (probably then only four or five in number, see John 1:37, etc.,) were invited to it.

3. The first miracle Jesus Christ wrought was at it, and in honor of it.

4. The mother of Christ, the most pure of all virgins, the most holy of all wives, and the first Christian mother, was also at it.

5. The marriage was according to God, or these holy persons would not have attended it.

6. The bride and bridegroom must have been a holy pair, otherwise they would have had nothing to do with such holy company.

Marriage is ever honorable in itself; but it is not at all times used honourably. Where Jesus is not invited to bless the union, no good can be expected; and where the disciples of sin and Satan are preferred to the disciples of Christ, on such occasions, it is a melancholy intimation that so bad a beginning will have a bad ending. I am afraid we may search long, before we find a marriage conducted on such principles as this appears to have been, even among those who make more than a common profession of the religion of Christ.

**Verse 3. *They have no wine.***— Though the blessed virgin is supposed to have never seen her son work a miracle before this time, yet she seems to have expected him to do something extraordinary on this occasion; as, from her acquaintance with him, she must have formed some adequate idea of his power and goodness.

**Verse 4. *Woman, what have I to do with thee?***— **τι εμοι και σοι, γυναι:** O, woman, what is this to thee and me? This is an abrupt denial, as if he had said: “WE are not employed to provide the necessaries for this feast: this matter belongs to others, who should have made a proper and sufficient provision for the persons they had invited.” The words seem to convey a reproof to the virgin, for meddling with that which did not particularly concern her. The holiest persons are always liable to errors of judgment: and should ever conduct themselves with modesty and humility, especially in those things in which the providence of God is particularly concerned. But here indeed there appears to be no blame. It is very likely the bride or bridegroom’s family were relatives of the blessed virgin; and she would naturally suppose that our Lord would feel interested for the honor and comfort of the family, and, knowing that he possessed extraordinary power, made this application to him to come forward to their assistance. Our Lord’s answer to his mother, if properly translated, is far from being disrespectful. He addresses the virgin as he did the Syrophenician woman, Matthew 15:28; as he did the Samaritan woman, John 4:21, as he addressed his disconsolate mother when he hung upon the

cross, John 19:26; as he did his most affectionate friend Mary Magdalene, John 20:15, and as the angels had addressed her before, John 20:13; and as St. Paul does the believing Christian woman, 1 Corinthians 7:16; in all which places the same term, *γυναι* which occurs in this verse, is used; and where certainly no kind of disrespect is intended, but, on the contrary, complaisance, affability, tenderness, and concern and in this sense it is used in the best Greek writers.

*Mine hour is not yet come.*— Or, my time, for in this sense the word *ωρα* is often taken. My time for working a miracle is not yet fully come. What I do, I do when necessary, and not before. Nature is unsteady—full of haste; and ever blundering, in consequence. It is the folly and sin of men that they are ever finding fault with the Divine providence. According to them, God never does any thing in due time—he is too early or too late: whereas it is utterly impossible for the Divine wisdom to forestall itself; or for the Divine goodness to delay what is necessary.

**Verse 5.** *His mother saith, etc.*— The virgin seems to have understood our Lord as hinted above. It was not yet time to grant them a supply, because the want had not as yet been generally felt. But, silently receiving the respectful caution, she saw that the miracle should be wrought when it best suited the purposes of the Divine wisdom.

**Verse 6.** *After the manner of the purifying of the Jews*— Or, for the purpose of the purifying of the Jews. The preposition *κατα*, which I have translated, for the purpose, often denotes in the best Greek writers the final cause of a thing. See several examples produced by Raphelius, from Arrian and Herodotus. These six vessels were set in a convenient place, for the purpose of the Jews washing their hands before they sat down to meat, and probably for other purposes of purification. See this custom referred to in Matthew 15:2. As to the number six, we need seek for no mystery in it; the number of pots was proportioned to the number of the guests.

*Containing two or three firkins apiece.*— Measures or metretes, *μετρητας*. Bishop Cumberland supposes that the Syrian metretes is here meant, which he computes to have held seven pints and one eighth of a pint; and, if this computation be right, the whole six water pots might have contained about fourteen gallons and a quart. Others make each metretes to

contain ten gallons and two pints: see Arbuthnot. But the contents of the measures of the ancients are so very uncertain that it is best, in this and numberless other cases, to attempt to determine nothing.

**Verse 8. *Governor of the feast.***— The original word, *αρχιτρικλινος*, signifies one who is chief or head over three couches, or tables. In the Asiatic countries, they take their meals sitting, or rather reclining, on small low couches. And when many people are present, so that they cannot all eat together, three of these low tables or couches are put together in form of a crescent, and some one of the guests is appointed to take charge of the persons who sit at these tables. Hence the appellation of architriclinus, the chief over three couches or tables, which in process of time became applied to the governor or steward of a feast, let the guests be many or few; and such person, having conducted the business well, had a festive crown put on his head by the guests, at the conclusion of the feast. See Ecclesiasticus, 32:1-3. It is very common for the Hindoos to appoint a person who is expert in conducting the ceremonies of a feast to manage as governor. This person is seldom the master of the house.

***And they bare it.***— A question has been asked, “Did our Lord turn all the water into wine which the six measures contained?” To which I answer: There is no proof that he did; and I take it for granted that he did not. It may be asked, “How could a part be turned into wine, and not the whole?” To which I answer: The water, in all likelihood, was changed into wine as it was drawn out, and not otherwise. “But did not our Lord by this miracle minister to vice, by producing an excess of inebriating liquor?” No; for the following reasons: 1. The company was a select and holy company, where no excess could be permitted. And, 2. Our Lord does not appear to have furnished any extra quantity, but only what was necessary. “But it is intimated in the text that the guests were nearly intoxicated before this miraculous addition to their wine took place; for the evangelist says, *οταν μεθυσθωσι*, when they have become intoxicated.” I answer: 1. It is not intimated, even in the most indirect manner, that these guests were at all intoxicated. 2. The words are not spoken of the persons at that wedding at all: the governor of the feast only states that such was the common custom at feasts of this nature; without intimating that any such custom prevailed there. 3. The original word bears a widely different meaning from that which the objection forces upon it. The verbs *μεθυσκω* and *μεθω*, from

μεθυσ, wine, which, from μετα θυειν, to drink after sacrificing, signify not only to inebriate, but to take wine, to drink wine, to drink enough: and in this sense the verb is evidently used in the Septuagint, Genesis 43:34; So 5:1; 1 Macc. 16:16; Haggai 1:6; Eccclus. 1:16. And the Prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 58:11, speaking of the abundant blessings of the godly, compares them to a watered garden, which the Septuagint translate, ως κηπος μεθυσων, by which is certainly understood, not a garden drowned with water, but one sufficiently saturated with it, not having one drop too much, nor too little.

**Verse 10.** *The good wine until now.*— That which our Lord now made being perfectly pure, and highly nutritive!

**Verse 11.** *This beginning of miracles*— It was probably the first he ever wrought:—at any rate, it was the first he wrought after his baptism, and the first he wrought publicly.

*His glory*— His supreme Divinity: John 1:14.

*His disciples believed on him.*— Were more abundantly confirmed in their faith, that he was either the promised Messiah, or a most extraordinary prophet, in the fullest intercourse with the ever blessed God.

**Verse 13.** *And the Jews' passover was at hand*— This was the reason why he stayed but a few days at Capernaum, John 2:12, as he wished to be present at the celebration of this feast at Jerusalem.

This was the first passover after Christ's baptism. The second is mentioned, Luke 6:1. The third, John 6:4. And the fourth, which was that at which he was crucified, John 11:55. From which it appears, 1. That our blessed Lord continued his public ministry about three years and a half, according to the prophecy of Daniel, Daniel 9:27. And, 2. That, having been baptized about the beginning of his thirtieth year, he was crucified precisely in the middle of his thirty-third. See Martin.

**Verse 14.** *Found in the temple those that sold oxen, etc.*— This is a similar fact to that mentioned Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45. See it explained on Matthew 21:12. If it be the same fact, then John anticipates three years of time in relating it here; as that cleansing of the temple mentioned by the other evangelists took place in the last week of

our Lord's life. Mr. Mann, Dr. Priestley, and Bp. Pearce, contend that our Lord cleansed the temple only once; and that was at the last passover. Calvin, Mr. Mede, L'Enfant and Beausobre, Dr. Lardner, Bp. Hurd, and Bp. Newcome, contend that he purged the temple twice; and that this, mentioned by John, was the first cleansing, which none of the other evangelists have mentioned. Let the reader, says Bp. Newcome, observe the order of events.

“Jesus works his first miracle at Cana of Galilee, John 2:11; then he passes a few days at Capernaum, which bring him on his way to Jerusalem, John 2:12. The passover being near, he goes up to Jerusalem, John 2:13, and casts the traders out of the temple, John 2:15, 16, At the passover he works many miracles, John 2:23. While he is in Jerusalem, which city he does not leave till, John 3:22, Nicodemus comes to him by night, John 3:1, 2. John 3:2 contains a reference to John 2:23. After these things, Jesus departs from Jerusalem, and dwells and baptizes in Judea, John 3:22. And all these incidents take place before John was cast into prison, John 3:24. But the second cleansing of the temple happens most clearly during the last week of our Lord's life, after the death of the Baptist, and at a time when it would be absurd to say that afterwards Jesus dwelt and baptized in Judea.”

The vindication of God's house from profanation was the first and the last care of our Lord; and it is probable he began and finished his public ministry by this significant act.

It certainly appears that John directly asserts an early cleansing of the temple, by the series of his history; as the other three evangelists assert a later cleansing of it. And though the act mentioned here seems to be nearly the same with that mentioned by the other evangelists, yet there are some differences. St. John alone mentions the scourge of rushes, and the casting out of the sheep and oxen. Besides, there is a considerable difference in our Lord's manner of doing it: in the cleansing mentioned by the three evangelists, he assumes a vast deal of authority, and speaks more pointedly concerning himself, than he appears to do in this cleansing mentioned by St. John: the reason which has been given is, In the first cleansing he was just entering upon his public ministry, and therefore avoided (as much as was consistent with the accomplishment of his work)

the giving any offense to the Jewish rulers; but, in the last cleansing, he was just concluding his ministry, being about to offer up his life for the salvation of the world, in consequence of which he speaks fully and without reserve. For answers to all the objections made against two cleansings of the temple, see the notes at the end of Bp. Newcome's Greek Harmony of the Gospels, pp. 7-9.

**Verse 17. *The zeal of thine house***— See Psalm 59:10. Zeal to promote thy glory, and to keep thy worship pure.

**Verse 18. *What sign showest thou***— See on Matthew 12:38; 16:1. When Moses came to deliver Israel, he gave signs, or miracles, that he acted under a Divine commission. What miracle dost thou work to show us that thou art vested with similar authority?

**Verse 19. *Destroy this temple***— τοῦ ναοῦ τούτου, This very temple; perhaps pointing to his body at the same time.

**Verse 20. *Forty and six years was this temple in building***— The temple of which the Jews spake was begun to be rebuilt by Herod the Great, in the 18th year of his reign: Joshua. Ant. b. xv. c. 11, s. 1; and xx. c. 9, s. 5, 7. But though he finished the main work in nine years and a half, yet some additional buildings or repairs were constantly carried on for many years afterwards. Herod began the work sixteen years before the birth of our Lord: the transactions which are here related took place in the thirtieth year of our Lord, which make the term exactly forty-six years.

Rosenmuller. Josephus, Ant. b. xx. c. 8, s. 5, 7, has told us that the whole of the buildings belonging to the temple were not finished till Nero's reign, when Albinus, the governor of Judea, was succeeded by Gessius Florus, which was eighty years after the eighteenth year of Herod's reign. See Bp. Pearce.

**Verse 21. *Of the temple of his body***.— Rather, the temple, his body: his body had no particular temple: but it was the temple of his Divinity—the place in which, as in the ancient temple, his Godhead dwelt; See how the Jews perverted these words, Matthew 26:60, and the notes there.

**Verse 22. *Remembered that he had said this unto them***— αὐτοῖς, to them, is wanting in AEHLMS, Matt. BV, upwards of one hundred others;



both the Syriac; Persic, Arabic, Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, and Itala. Griesbach has left it out of the text.

***They believed the scripture***— The scripture which the evangelist immediately refers to may have been Psalm 16:10. Compare this with Acts 2:31, 32, and with Acts 13:35-37. See also Psalm 2:7, and compare it with Hebrews 1:5, and Hebrews 5:5, and with Acts 13:33. They understood these scriptures in a sense in which they never before understood them.

It is the property of many prophecies never to be understood except by their accomplishment; but these are so marked that, when their fulfillment takes place, they cannot be misunderstood, or applied to any other event.

**Verse 23. *Many believed in his name***— They believed him to be the promised Messiah, but did not believe in him to the salvation of their souls: for we find, from the following verse, that their hearts were not at all changed, because our blessed Lord could not trust himself to them.

**Verse 24. *He knew all men***— Instead of *παντας* all men, EGH, and about thirty others, read *παντα*, every man, or all things; and this I am inclined to believe is the true reading. Jesus knew all things; and why? Because he made all things, John 1:3, and because he was the all-wise God, John 1:1; and he knew all men, because he alone searches the heart, and tries the reins. He knows who are sincere, and who are hypocritical: he knows those in whom he can confide, and those to whom he can neither trust himself nor his gifts. Reader, he also knows thee: thy cares, fears, perplexities, temptations, afflictions, desires, and hopes; thy helps and hinderances; the progress thou hast made in the Divine life, or thy declension from it. If he know thee to be hypocritical or iniquitous, he looks upon thee with abhorrence: if he know thee to be of a meek and broken spirit, he looks on thee with pity, complacency, and delight. Take courage-thou canst say, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I do love thee, and mourn because I love and serve thee so little: then expect him to come in unto thee, and make his abode with thee: while thy eye and heart are simple, he will love thee, and thy whole soul shall be full of light. To him be glory and dominion for ever!

## CHAPTER 3.

*The conversation between Nicodemus and our Lord, about the new birth and faith in his testimony, 1-15. The love of God, the source of human salvation, 16. Who are condemned, and who are approved, 17-21. Jesus and his disciples come to Judea, and baptize, 22. John baptizes in AEnon, 23, 24. The disciples of John and the Pharisees dispute about purifying, 25 The discourse between John and his disciples about Christ, in which the excellence, perfection, and privileges, of the Christian dispensation are pointed out, 26-36.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1.** *Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*— One of the members of the grand Sanhedrin; for such were ordinarily styled rulers among the Jews. A person of the name of Nicodemus, the son of Gorion, is mentioned in the Jewish writings, who lived in the time of Vespasian, and was reputed to be so rich that he could support all the inhabitants of Jerusalem for ten years. But this is said in their usual extravagant mode of talking.

**Verse 2.** *Came to Jesus by night*— He had matters of the utmost importance, on which he wished to consult Christ; and he chose the night season, perhaps less through the fear of man than through a desire to have Jesus alone, as he found him all the day encompassed with the multitude; so that it was impossible for him to get an opportunity to speak fully on those weighty affairs concerning which he intended to consult him. However, we may take it for granted that he had no design at present to become his disciple; as baptism and circumcision, which were the initiating ordinances among the Jews, were never administered in the night time. If any person received baptism by night, he was not acknowledged for a proselyte. See Wetstein. But as Jews were not obliged to be baptized, they being circumcised, and consequently in the covenant, he, being a Jew, would not feel any necessity of submitting to this rite.

**Rabbi**— My Master, or Teacher, a title of respect given to the Jewish doctors, something like our Doctor of Divinity, i.e. teacher of Divine

things. But as there may be many found among us who, though they bear the title, are no teachers, so it was among the Jews; and perhaps it was in reference to this that Nicodemus uses the word *διδασκαλος*, didaskalos, immediately after, by which, in John 1:38, St. John translates the word rabbi. Rabbi, teacher, is often no more than a title of respect: didaskolos signifies a person who not only has the name of teacher, but who actually does teach.

*We know that thou art a teacher come from God*— We, all the members of the grand Sanhedrin, and all the rulers of the people, who have paid proper attention to thy doctrine and miracles. We are all convinced of this, though we are not all candid enough to own it. It is possible, however, that *οιδαμεν*, we know, signifies no more than, it is known, it is generally acknowledged and allowed, that thou art a teacher come from God.

*No man can do these miracles*— It is on the evidence of thy miracles that I ground my opinion of thee. No man can do what thou dost, unless the omnipotence of God be with him.

**Verse 3. *Jesus answered***— Not in the language of compliment:—he saw the state of Nicodemus's soul, and he immediately addressed himself to him on a subject the most interesting and important. But what connection is there between our Lord's reply, and the address of Nicodemus? Probably our Lord saw that the object of his visit was to inquire about the Messiah's kingdom; and in reference to this he immediately says, Except a man be born again, etc.

The repetition of *amen*, or *verily, verily*, among the Jewish writers, was considered of equal import with the most solemn oath.

*Be born again*— Or, from above: different to that new birth which the Jews supposed every baptized proselyte enjoyed; for they held that the Gentile, who became a proselyte, was like a child new born. This birth was of water from below: the birth for which Christ contends is *ανωθεν*, from above—by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Every man must have two births, one from heaven, the other from earth—one of his body, the other of his soul: without the first he cannot see nor enjoy this world, without the last he can not see nor enjoy the kingdom of God. As there is an absolute necessity that a child should be born into the world, that he may see its

light, contemplate its glories, and enjoy its good, so there is an absolute necessity that the soul should be brought out of its state of darkness and sin, through the light and power of the grace of Christ, that it may be able to see, *ιδειν*, or, to discern, the glories and excellencies of the kingdom of Christ here, and be prepared for the enjoyment of the kingdom of glory hereafter. The Jews had some general notion of the new birth; but, like many among Christians, they put the acts of proselytism, baptism, etc., in the place of the Holy Spirit and his influence: they acknowledged that a man must be born again; but they made that new birth to consist in profession, confession, and external washing. See on John 3:10.

The new birth which is here spoken of comprehends, not only what is termed justification or pardon, but also sanctification or holiness. Sin must be pardoned, and the impurity of the heart washed away, before any soul can possibly enter into the kingdom of God. As this new birth implies the renewing of the whole soul in righteousness and true holiness, it is not a matter that may be dispensed with: heaven is a place of holiness, and nothing but what is like itself can ever enter into it.

**Verse 4. *How can a man be born when he is old?***— It is probable that Nicodemus was pretty far advanced in age at this time; and from his answer we may plainly perceive that, like the rest of the Jews, and like multitudes of Christians, he rested in the letter, without paying proper attention to the spirit: the shadow, without the thing signified, had hitherto satisfied him. Our Lord knew him to be in this state, and this was the cause of his pointed address to him.

**Verse 5. *Of water and of the Spirit***— To the baptism of water a man was admitted when he became a proselyte to the Jewish religion; and, in this baptism, he promised in the most solemn manner to renounce idolatry, to take the God of Israel for his God, and to have his life conformed to the precepts of the Divine law. But the water which was used on the occasion was only an emblem of the Holy Spirit. The soul was considered as in a state of defilement, because of past sin: now, as by that water the body was washed, cleansed, and refreshed, so, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, the soul was to be purified from its defilement, and strengthened to walk in the way of truth and holiness.

When John came baptizing with water, he gave the Jews the plainest intimations that this would not suffice; that it was only typical of that baptism of the Holy Ghost, under the similitude of fire, which they must all receive from Jesus Christ: see Matthew 3:11. Therefore, our Lord asserts that a man must be born of water and the Spirit, i.e. of the Holy Ghost, which, represented under the similitude of water, cleanses, refreshes, and purifies the soul. Reader, hast thou never had any other baptism than that of water? If thou hast not had any other, take Jesus Christ's word for it, thou canst not, in thy present state, enter into the kingdom of God. I would not say to thee merely, read what it is to be born of the Spirit: but pray, O pray to God incessantly, till he give thee to feel what is implied in it! Remember, it is Jesus only who baptizes with the Holy Ghost: see John 1:33. He who receives not this baptism has neither right nor title to the kingdom of God; nor can he with any propriety be termed a Christian, because that which essentially distinguished the Christian dispensation from that of the Jews was, that its author baptized all his followers with the Holy Ghost.

Though baptism by water, into the Christian faith, was necessary to every Jew and Gentile that entered into the kingdom of the Messiah, it is not necessary that by water and the Spirit (in this place) we should understand two different things: it is probably only an elliptical form of speech, for the Holy Spirit under the similitude of water; as, in Matthew 3:3, the Holy Ghost and fire, do not mean two things, but one, viz. the Holy Ghost under the similitude of fire-pervading every part, refining and purifying the whole.

**Verse 6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh***— This is the answer to the objection made by Nicodemus in John 3:4. Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Our Lord here intimates that, were even this possible, it would not answer the end; for the plant will ever be of the nature of the seed that produces it-like will beget its like. The kingdom of God is spiritual and holy; and that which is born of the Spirit resembles the Spirit; for as he is who beget, so is he who is begotten of him. Therefore, the spiritual regeneration is essentially necessary, to prepare the soul for a holy and spiritual kingdom.

**Verse 8. *The wind bloweth***— Though the manner in which this new birth is effected by the Divine Spirit, be incomprehensible to us, yet we must not, on this ground, suppose it to be impossible. The wind blows in a variety of directions—we hear its sound, perceive its operation in the motion of the trees, etc., and feel it on ourselves—but we cannot discern the air itself; we only know that it exists by the effects which it produces: so is every one who is born of the Spirit: the effects are as discernible and as sensible as those of the wind; but itself we cannot see. But he who is born of God knows that he is thus born: the Spirit itself, the grand agent in this new birth, beareth witness with his spirit, that he is born of God, Romans 8:16; for, he that believeth hath the witness in himself, 1 John 4:13; 5:10; Galatians 4:6. And so does this Spirit work in and by him that others, though they see not the principle, can easily discern the change produced; for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, 1 John 5:4.

**Verse 9. *How can these things be?***— Our Lord had very plainly told him how these things could be, and illustrated the new birth by one of the most proper similes that could be chosen; but so intent was this great man in making every thing submit to the testimony of his senses that he appears unwilling to believe any thing, unless he can comprehend it. This is the case with many—they profess to believe because they comprehend; but they are impostors who speak thus: there is not a man in the universe that can fully comprehend one operation, either of God or his instrument nature; and yet they must believe, and do believe, though they never did nor ever can fully comprehend, or account for, the objects of their faith.

**Verse 10. *Art thou a master of Israel, etc.***— Hast thou taken upon thee to guide the blind into the way of truth; and yet knowest not that truth thyself? Dost thou command proselytes to be baptized with water, as an emblem of a new birth; and art thou unacquainted with the cause, necessity, nature, and effects of that new birth? How many masters are there still in Israel who are in this respect deplorably ignorant; and, strange to tell, publish their ignorance and folly in the sight of the sun, by writing and speaking against the thing itself! It is strange that such people cannot keep their own secret.

“But water baptism is this new birth.” No. Jesus tells you, a man must be born of water and the Spirit; and the water, and its effects upon the body,

differ as much from this Spirit, which it is intended to represent, and the effects produced in the soul, as real fire does from painted flame.

“But I am taught to believe that this baptism is regeneration.” Then you are taught to believe a falsity. The Church of England, in which perhaps you are a teacher or a member, asks the following questions, and returns the subjoined answers.

“Q. How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?” “A. Two only, as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord.”

“Q. How many parts are there in a sacrament?” “A. Two. The outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.”

“Q. What is the outward visible sign, or form, in baptism?” “A. Water, wherein the person is baptized, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

“Q. What is the inward and spiritual grace?” “A. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.”

Now, I ask, Whereby are such persons made the children of grace? Not by the water, but by the death unto sin, and the new birth unto righteousness: i.e. through the agency of the Holy Ghost, sin is destroyed, and the soul filled with holiness.

**Verse 11.** *We speak that we do know*— I and my disciples do not profess to teach a religion which we do not understand, nor exemplify in our conduct. A strong but delicate reproof to Nicodemus, who, though a master of Israel, did not understand the very rudiments of the doctrine of salvation. He was ignorant of the nature of the new birth. How wretched is the lot of that minister, who, while he professes to recommend the salvation of God to others, is all the while dealing in the meagre, unfruitful traffic of an unfelt truth! Let such either acquire the knowledge of the grace of God themselves, or cease to proclaim it.

*Ye receive not our witness.*— It was deemed criminal among the Jews to question or depart from the authority of their teachers. Nicodemus grants that our Lord is a teacher come from God, and yet scruples to receive his

testimony relative to the new birth, and the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom.

**Verse 12. *If I have told you earthly things***— If, after I have illustrated this new birth by a most expressive metaphor taken from earthly things, and after all you believe not; how can you believe, should I tell you of heavenly things, in such language as angels use, where earthly images and illustrations can have no place? Or, if you, a teacher in Israel, do not understand the nature of such an earthly thing, or custom of the kingdom established over the Jewish nation, as being born of baptism, practised every day in the initiation of proselytes, how will you understand such heavenly things as the initiation of my disciples by the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire from heaven, if I should proceed farther on the subject?

**Verse 13. *No man hath ascended***— This seems a figurative expression for, No man hath known the mysteries of the kingdom of God; as in Deuteronomy 30:12; Psalm 73:17; Proverbs 30:4; Romans 11:34. And the expression is founded upon this generally received maxim: That to be perfectly acquainted with the concerns of a place, it is necessary for a person to be on the spot. But our Lord probably spoke to correct a false notion among the Jews, viz. that Moses had ascended to heaven, in order to get the law. It is not Moses who is to be heard now, but Jesus: Moses did not ascend to heaven; but the Son of man is come down from heaven to reveal the Divine will.

***That came down***— The incarnation of Christ is represented under the notion of his coming down from heaven, to dwell upon earth.

***Which is in heaven.***— Lest a wrong meaning should be taken from the foregoing expression, and it should be imagined that, in order to manifest himself upon earth he must necessarily leave heaven; our blessed Lord qualifies it by adding, the Son of man who is in heaven; pointing out, by this, the ubiquity or omnipresence of his nature: a character essentially belonging to God; for no being can possibly exist in more places than one at a time, but HE who fills the heavens and the earth.

**Verse 14. *As Moses lifted up***— He shows the reason why he descended from heaven, that he might be lifted up, i.e. crucified, for the salvation of



man. kind, and be, by the appointment of God, as certain a remedy for sinful souls as the brazen serpent elevated on a pole, Numbers 21:9, was for the bodies of the Israelites, which had been bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness. It does not appear to me that the brazen serpent was ever intended to be considered as a type of Christ. It is possible to draw likenesses and resemblances out of any thing; but, in such matters as these, we should take heed that we go no farther than we can say, Thus it is written. Among the Jews, the brazen serpent was considered a type of the resurrection—through it the dying lived; and so, by the voice of God, they that were dead shall be raised to life. As the serpent was raised up, so shall Christ be lifted up: as they who were stung by the fiery serpents were restored by looking up to the brazen serpent, so those who are infected with and dying through sin are healed and saved, by looking up to and believing in Christ crucified. These are all the analogies which we can legitimately trace between the lifting up of the brazen serpent, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The lifting up of the Son of man may refer to his mediatorial office at the right hand of God. See the note on Numbers 21:9.

**Verse 15. *That whosoever believeth***— Bp. Pearce supposes that this verse is only the conclusion of the 16th, and that it has been inserted in this place by mistake. The words contain the reason of the subject in the following verse, and seem to break in upon our Lord's argument before he had fully stated it. The words, *μη αποληται αλλα*, may not perish but, are omitted by some very ancient MSS. and versions.

**Verse 16. *For God so loved the world***— Such a love as that which induced God to give his only begotten son to die for the world could not be described: Jesus Christ does not attempt it. He has put an eternity of meaning in the particle *ουτω*, so, and left a subject for everlasting contemplation, wonder, and praise, to angels and to men. The same evangelist uses a similar mode of expression, 1 John 3:1: Behold, WHAT MANNER of love, *ποταπην αγαπην*, the Father hath bestowed upon us.

From the subject before him, let the reader attend to the following particulars.

First, The world was in a ruinous, condemned state, about to perish everlastingly; and was utterly without power to rescue itself from destruction.

Secondly, That God, through the impulse of his eternal love, provided for its rescue and salvation, by giving his Son to die for it.

Thirdly, That the sacrifice of Jesus was the only mean by which the redemption of man could be effected, and that it is absolutely sufficient to accomplish this gracious design: for it would have been inconsistent with the wisdom of God, to have appointed a sacrifice greater in itself, or less in its merit, than what the urgent necessities of the case required.

Fourthly, That sin must be an indescribable evil, when it required no less a sacrifice, to make atonement for it, than God manifested in the flesh.

Fifthly, That no man is saved through this sacrifice, but he that believes, i.e. who credits what God has spoken concerning Christ, his sacrifice, the end for which it was offered, and the way in which it is to be applied in order to become effectual.

Sixthly, That those who believe receive a double benefit: 1. They are exempted from eternal perdition-that they may not perish. 2. They are brought to eternal glory-that they may have everlasting life. These two benefits point out tacitly the state of man: he is guilty, and therefore exposed to punishment: he is impure, and therefore unfit for glory.

They point out also the two grand operations of grace, by which the salvation of man is effected. 1. Justification, by which the guilt of sin is removed, and consequently the person is no longer obnoxious to perdition. 2. Sanctification, or the purification of his nature, by which he is properly fitted for the kingdom of glory.

**Verse 17. *For God sent not, etc.***— It was the opinion of the Jews that the Gentiles, whom they often term the world, **עלמה** *olmah*, and **העולם** *ha'olam*, **אומות** *omoth haolam*, nations of the world, were to be destroyed in the days of the Messiah. Christ corrects this false opinion; and teaches here a contrary doctrine. God, by giving his Son, and publishing his design in giving him, shows that he purposes the salvation, not the destruction, of the world-the Gentile people: nevertheless, those who will not receive the

salvation he had provided for them, whether Jews or Gentiles, must necessarily perish; for this plain reason, There is but one remedy, and they refuse to apply it.

**Verse 18. *He that believeth***— As stated before on John 3:16.

***Is not condemned***— For past sin, that being forgiven on his believing in Christ.

***But he that believeth not***— When the Gospel is preached to him, and the way of salvation made plain.

***Is condemned already***— Continues under the condemnation which Divine justice has passed upon all sinners; and has this superadded, He hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God, and therefore is guilty of the grossest insult to the Divine majesty, in neglecting, slighting, and despising the salvation which the infinite mercy of God had provided for him.

**Verse 19. *This is the condemnation***— That is, this is the reason why any shall be found finally to perish, not that they came into the world with a perverted and corrupt nature, which is true; nor that they lived many years in the practice of sin, which is also true; but because they refused to receive the salvation which God sent to them.

***Light is come***— That is, Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, the fountain of light and life; diffusing his benign influences every where, and favoring men with a clear and full revelation of the Divine will.

***Men loved darkness***— Have preferred sin to holiness, Belial to Christ, and hell to heaven. **חַשְׁכָּה** chashac, darkness, is frequently used by the Jewish writers for the angel of death, and for the devil. See many examples in Schoettgen.

***Because their deeds were evil.***— An allusion to robbers and cut-throats, who practice their abominations in the night season, for fear of being detected. The sun is a common blessing to the human race-it shines to all, envies none, and calls all to necessary labor. If any one choose rather to sleep by day, that he may rob and murder in the night season, he does this to his own peril, and has no excuse:-his punishment is the necessary

consequence of his own unconstrained actions. So will the punishment of ungodly men be. There was light—they refused to walk in it. They chose to walk in the darkness, that they might do the works of darkness—they broke the Divine law, refused the mercy offered to them, are arrested by Divine justice, convicted, condemned, and punished. Whence, then, does their damnation proceed? From THEMSELVES.

**Verse 20.** *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light*— He who doth vile or abominable things: alluding to the subject mentioned in the preceding verse.

The word *φαιλος*, evil or vile, is supposed by some to come from the Hebrew פָּלַס *phalas*, to roll, and so cover oneself in dust or ashes, which was practised in token of humiliation and grief, not only by the more eastern nations, see Job 42:6, but also by the Greeks and Trojans, as appears from Homer, *Iliad* xviii. l. 26; xxii. l. 414; xxiv. l. 640; compare Virgil, *AEn.* x. l. 844; and Ovid, *Metam.* lib. viii. l. 528. From the above Hebrew word, it is likely that the Saxon *ful*, the English *foul*, the Latin *vilis*, and the English *vile*, are derived. See Parkhurst under *φαιλος*.

*Lest his deeds should be reproved.*— Or discovered. To manifest or discover, is one sense of the original word, *ελεγχω*, in the best Greek writers; and it is evidently its meaning in this place.

**Verse 21.** *Wrought in God.*— In his presence, and through his assistance. This is the end of our Lord's discourse to Nicodemus; and though we are not informed here of any good effects produced by it, yet we learn from other scriptures that it had produced the most blessed effects in his mind, and that from this time he became a disciple of Christ. He publicly defended our Lord in the Sanhedrin, of which he was probably a member, John 7:50, and, with Joseph of Arimathea, gave him an honorable funeral, John 19:39, when all his bosom friends had deserted him. See Dodd.

**Verse 22.** *Came-into the land of Judea*— Jerusalem itself, where Christ held the preceding discourse with Nicodemus, was in Judea; but the evangelist means that our Lord quitted the city and its suburbs, and went into the country parts. The same distinction between Jerusalem and Judea is made, Acts 1:8; 10:39; and in 1 Macc. 3:34; and in 2 Macc. 1:1, 10. See Bp. Pearce.

**And baptized.**— It is not clear that Christ did baptize any with water, but his disciples did—John 4:2; and what they did, by his authority and command, is attributed to himself. It is a common custom, in all countries and in all languages, to attribute the operations of those who are under the government and direction of another to him by whom they are directed and governed. Some however suppose that Christ at first did baptize; but, when he got disciples, he left this work to them: and thus these two places are to be understood:—1. this place, of Christ's baptizing before he called the twelve disciples; and 2. John 4:2, of the baptism administered by the disciples, after they had been called to the work by Christ.

**Verse 23. In AEnon**— This place was eight miles southward from Scythopolis, between Salim and Jordan.

**There was much water**— And this was equally necessary, where such multitudes were baptized, whether the ceremony were performed either by dipping or sprinkling. But as the Jewish custom required the persons to stand in the water, and, having been instructed, and entered into a covenant to renounce all idolatry, and take the God of Israel for their God, then plunge themselves under the water, it is probable that the rite was thus performed at AEnon. The consideration that they dipped themselves, tends to remove the difficulty expressed in the note on Matthew 3:6. See the observations at the end of Mark.

**Verse 25. John's disciples and the Jews**— Instead of *Ἰουδαίων*, Jews, ABELS. M. BV, nearly 100 others, some versions and fathers, read *Ἰουδαίου*, a Jew, which Griesbach has admitted into the text. The person here spoken of was probably one who had been baptized by the disciples of our Lord; and the subject of debate seems to have been, whether the baptism of John, or that of Christ, was the most efficacious towards purifying.

**Verse 26. And they came unto John**— That he might decide the question.

**Verse 27. A man can receive nothing**, etc.— Or, A man can receive nothing from heaven, unless it be given him. I have received, not only my commission, but the power also by which I have executed it, from above. As I took it up at God's command, so I am ready to lay it down when he

pleases. I have told you from the beginning that I was only the forerunner of the Messiah, and was sent, not to form a separate party, but to point out to men that Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world: John 3:28.

**Verse 29. *He that hath the bride***— The congregation of believers.

***Is the bridegroom***— The Lord Jesus—the Head of the Church. See Matthew 22:2, etc., where the parable of the marriage feast is explained.

***The friend of the bridegroom***— The person whom the Greeks called the paranymph—there were two at each wedding: one waited on the bride, the other on the bridegroom: their business was to serve them, to inspect the concerns of the bridechamber, and afterwards to reconcile differences between husband and wife, when any took place. John considers himself as standing in this relation to the Lord Jesus, while espousing human nature, and converting souls to himself: this is the meaning of standeth by, i.e. ready to serve. See the observations at the end of the chapter. {John 3:36}

**Verse 30. *He must increase***— His present success is but the beginning of a most glorious and universal spread of righteousness, peace, truth, and good will among men.

***I must decrease***.— My baptism and teaching, as pointing out the coming Messiah, must cease; because the Messiah is now come, and has entered publicly on the work of his glorious ministry.

**Verse 31. *Is above all***— This blessed bridegroom, who has descended from heaven, John 3:13, is above all, superior to Moses, the prophets, and me.

***He that is of the earth***— John himself, who was born in the common way of man.

***Speaketh of the earth***— Cannot speak of heavenly things as Christ can do; and only represents Divine matters by these earthly ordinances; for the spirit and meaning of which, you must all go to the Messiah himself.

**Verse 32. *And no man receiveth his testimony***.— Or, And this his testimony no man taketh up. That is, the testimony which John had borne

to the Jews, that Jesus was the promised Messiah. No man taketh up.-No person is found to tread in my steps, and to publish to the Jews that this is the Christ, the Savior of the world. See this sense of the original fully proved and vindicated by Kypke in loc.

**Verse 33. *Hath set to his seal***— That is hath hereby confirmed the truth of the testimony which he has borne; as a testator sets his seal to an instrument in order to confirm it, and such instrument is considered as fully confirmed by having the testator's seal affixed to it, so I, by taking up this testimony of Christ, and proclaiming it to the Jews, have fully confirmed it, as I know it to be a truth; which knowledge I have from the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit. See John 1:33, 34.

**Verse 34. *For God giveth not the Spirit by measure***— He is the most perfect of all teachers, as having received the Holy Spirit as none before him ever did. Without measure-not for a particular time, people, purpose, etc., but for the whole compass of time, and in reference to all eternity. Former dispensations of the Holy Spirit made partial discoveries of infinite justice and mercy; but now the sum of justice, in requiring such a sacrifice, and the plenitude of mercy, in providing it, shall, by that Spirit with which he baptizes, be made manifest to all the children of men. It is worthy of remark that this was fully done after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of pentecost, Acts 2:1, etc., as may be clearly seen in all the apostolic epistles. The Jews observe, that the Holy Spirit was given only in certain measures to the prophets; some writing only one book, others two. So Rab. Acba.

**Verse 35. *All things into his hand***.— See on Matthew 11:27. A principal design of John is, to show that Christ was infinitely above every teacher, prophet, and Divine messenger that had ever yet appeared. The prophets had various gifts: some had visions, others dreams; some had the gift of teaching, others of comforting, etc.; but none possessed all these gifts: Christ alone possessed their plenitude, and is all things in all.

**Verse 36. *Hath everlasting life***— He has already the seed of this life in his soul, having been made a partaker of the grace and spirit of him in whom he has believed. See on John 3:8.

**He that believeth not**— Or, obeyeth not-**απειθων**: from **α**, negative, and **πειθω**, to persuade, or **πειθομαι**, to obey-the want of the obedience of faith. The person who will not be persuaded, in consequence, does not believe; and, not having believed, he cannot obey.

**Shall not see life**— Shall never enjoy it: there being no way to the kingdom of God, but through Christ Jesus, Acts 4:12. And none can expect to enter into this kingdom but those who obey him; for to such only he is the author of eternal salvation, Hebrews 5:9.

**But the wrath of God abideth on him**— **οπη**, the displeasure of God. I should prefer displeasure to wrath, because the common acceptance of the latter (fury, rage) is not properly applicable here. Perhaps the original word is used in the same sense here as in Romans 2:5; 3:5; 13:4, 5; Ephesians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; where it evidently means punishment, which is the effect of irritated justice. Taken in this sense, we may consider the phrase as a Hebraism: punishment of God, i.e. the most heavy and awful of all punishments; such as sin deserves, and such as it becomes Divine justice to inflict. And this abideth on him-endures as long as his unbelief and disobedience remain! And how shall these be removed in a hell of fire! Reader! pray God that thou mayest never know what this continuing punishment means!

THERE are many very important topics brought forward in this chapter; the principal of which have been already illustrated in the notes: the subject in the 29th verse {John 3:29} is of great consequence, and requires some farther explanation.

The friend of the bridegroom is the person called among the Jews **שׁוֹשְׁבֵי** shoshabin; and **παρὰνυμφος**, paronymph, among the Greeks. Several matters are found in the Jewish writings relative to these, which may serve to throw light, not only on the discourse of John, but also on other passages of Scripture.

1. There were generally two shoshabinim; one for the bride, another for the bridegroom: though in many instances we find the shoshabin of the bride only mentioned.



2. These officers were chosen out of the most intimate and particular friends of the parties:—a brother might be shoshabin or paranymp to his brother.
3. Though it is probable that such persons were not always found in ordinary weddings, yet they were never absent from the marriages of kings, princes, and persons of distinction.
4. The Jews believe that this was an ordinance appointed by God; and that he himself was shoshabin to Adam. But in Bereshith Rabba it is said, that God took the cup of blessing and blessed the first pair; and that Michael and Gabriel were shoshabins to Adam.
5. So important was this office esteemed among them, that it was reckoned one of the indispensable works of charity: much depending on the proper discharge of it, as we shall afterwards find.
6. Those who were engaged in this office, were excused, for the time, from some of the severer duties of religion, because they had so much to do about the new-married pair, especially during the seven days of the marriage feast.

These shoshabins had a threefold office to fulfill, viz. before, at, and after the marriage: of each of these in order.

I. Before the marriage: it was the business of the shoshabin: —

1. To procure a husband for the virgin, to guard her, and to bear testimony to her corporeal and mental endowments; and it was upon this testimony of this friend that the bridegroom chose his bride.
2. He was the internuncio between her and her spouse elect; carrying all messages from her to him, and from him to her: for before marriage young women were very strictly guarded at home with their parents or friends.

II. At the wedding: it was the business of the shoshabin, if necessary: —

1. To vindicate the character of the bride.
2. To sleep in an apartment contiguous to the new-married pair, to prevent the bride from receiving injury.

3. It was his office to see that neither the bride nor bridegroom should be imposed on by each other; and therefore it was his business to examine and exhibit the tokens of the bride's purity, according to the law, Deuteronomy 22:13-21. Of their office, in this case, the rabbins thus speak: *Olim in Judea paranymphe perscrutati sunt locum (lectum) sponsi et sponsae-ad scrutandum et officiose observandum ea, quae sponsi illa nocte fecerint: ne scilicet alter alteri dolo damnum inferat: ne sponsus sanguinem virginitatis agnoscat, illum celet aut tollat: et ne sponsa pannum sanguine tinctum secum inferat.*

4. When they found that their friend had got a pure and chaste virgin, they exulted greatly; as their own character and the happiness of their friend, were at stake. To this the Baptist alludes, John 3:29, *This my joy is fulfilled.*

5. They distributed gifts to the new-married couple, which, on their marriage, were repaid either by their friend, or by his father. The same thing is done at what are called the biddings, at marriages in Wales, to the present day.

6. They continued with the bride and bridegroom the seven days of the marriage, and contributed variously to the festivity and hilarity of the occasion.

### III. After marriage.

1. The shoshabin was considered the patron and advocate of the wife, and in some sort her guardian, to which the apostle alludes, 2 Corinthians 11:2. He was generally called in to compose any differences which might happen between her and her husband, and reconcile them when they had been at variance.

2. They appear to have had the keeping of the marriage contract, which in certain cases they tore; when they had reason to suspect infidelity on the part of the woman, by which the marriage was dissolved; and thus the suspected person was prevented from suffering capitally. Schoettgen produces a case like this from R. Bechai, in *legem*, fol. 114. "A king visited foreign parts, and left his queen with her maids: they raised an evil report on her, and the king purposed to put her to death. The shoshabin hearing of it, tore the matrimonial contract, that he might have it to say, the

marriage is dissolved. The king, having investigated the case, found the queen innocent: she was immediately reconciled to her husband, and the shoshabin was directed to write another contract.”

3. Schoettgen very modestly hazards a conjecture, that, if the husband had either abandoned or divorced his wife, the shoshabin took her, and acted to her as a brother-in-law; which is probable from the place to which he refers, Judges 14:20: But Samson’s wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend: or, as both the Syriac and the Targum have it, she was given, **שׁוֹשְׁבֵינִיָּה** shoshebeeneyah, to his paranymp; which is agreeable to the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint, **καὶ συνωκησεν ἡ γυνὴ σαμψων τῷ νυμφαγωγῷ αὐτοῦ, ὃς ἦν εταῖρος αὐτοῦ**. And Samson’s wife dwelt (or cohabited) with his paranymp, who had been his companion. The same reading is found in the Complutensian Polyglott.

From the preceding particulars, collated with the speech of John in John 3:29, and with the words of St. Paul, 2 Corinthians 11:2, it is plain that Christ is represented as the BRIDEGROOM: the Church, or his genuine disciples, the BRIDE: the ministers of the Gospel, the **שׁוֹשְׁבֵינִים** SHOSHBEENIM, whose great and important duty it is to present to the bridegroom a pure, uncontaminated virgin, i.e. a Church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, Ephesians 5:27, alluding evidently to the office of the paranymp, on whom the bridegroom depended to procure him, for wife, a chaste and pure virgin. Hence that saying of St. Paul, who considered himself the paranymp to Jesus Christ: I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ, 2 Corinthians 11:2.

From all these particulars, we see that the office of the shoshabin, or paranymp, was a very important one among the Jews; and that, to it, some interesting references are made in the New Testament, the force and true meaning of which passages cannot be discerned without considering the character and office of the Jewish paranymp. See several good observations on this in Lightfoot’s notes on John 2:1, and Schoettgen, on John 3:29.

As the Christian Church was now to take place of the Jewish, and the latter was about to be cast off because it was polluted, John, by using the

simile of the bride, bridegroom, and paranymp, or friend of the bridegroom, points out, as it were prophetically, of what kind the Christian Church must be: it must be as holy and pure as an uncontaminated virgin, because it is to be the bride or spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ: and God honors the Baptist by making him the paranymp; and indeed his whole preaching and baptism were excellently calculated to produce this great effect, as he strongly proclaimed the necessity of a total reformation of heart and manners, among all classes of the people. See the notes on Matthew 3:8-12, and on Luke 3:10-14. He heard the bridegroom's voice — he faithfully communicated what he had received from heaven, John 3:27, and he rejoiced exceedingly to find that he had got a people prepared for the Lord. The success of John's preaching greatly contributed to the success of that of Christ and his disciples. For this purpose he was endued with power from on high, and chosen to be the paranymp of the heavenly bridegroom.

## CHAPTER 4.

*Jesus, finding that the Pharisees took offense at his making many disciples, leaves Judea to pass into Galilee, 1-3. And passing through Samaria comes to Sychar, and rests at Jacob's well, 4-6. While his disciples were gone to the city to buy meat, a woman of Samaria comes to draw water, with whom our Lord discourses at large on the spiritual nature of his religion, the perfection of the Divine nature, and the purity of his worship, 7-24. On his informing her that he was the Messiah, she leaves her pitcher, and goes to inform her townsmen, 25-30. His discourse with his disciples in her absence, 31-38. Many of the Samaritans believe on him, 39-42; He stays two days with them, and goes into Galilee, 43-45. He comes to Cana, and heals the son of a nobleman, in consequence of which he believes on him, with his whole family, 46-54.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1.** *Jesus made and baptized*, etc.— These seem to be quoted as the very words which were brought to the Pharisees; and, from our Lord's conduct after this information, we may take it for granted that they were so irritated that they were determined to seek an occasion to take away his life; in consequence of which, leaving Judea, he withdrew into Galilee.

**Verse 2.** *Jesus himself baptized not*— See John 3:22.

**Verse 4.** *And he must needs go through Samaria*.— Or, It was necessary for him to pass through Samaria: for this plain reason, and no other, because it was the only proper road. Samaria lay northward of Judea, and between the great sea, Galilee, and Jordan; and there was therefore no going from Galilee to Jerusalem but through this province. See the note on Luke 17:11. From Jerusalem to Galilee through Samaria, according to Josephus, was three days' journey. See his own life.

**Verse 5.** *A city-called Sychar*— This city was anciently called Shechem. It seems to have been situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim, in the province of Samaria, on which the temple of the Samaritans was built.

After the ruin of Samaria by Salmanezar, Sychar, or Shechem, became the capital of the Samaritans; and it continued so, according to Josephus, Ant. l. xi. c. 8, in the time of Alexander the Great. It was about ten miles from Shiloh, forty from Jerusalem, and fifty-two from Jericho. It probably got the name of Sychar, which signifies drunken, from the drunkenness of its inhabitants. With this crime the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 28:1, 3, 7, 8) solemnly charges the Ephraimites, within whose limits the city stood. This place is remarkable in the Scriptures: 1. As being that where Abram first stopped on his coming from Haran to Canaan. 2. Where God first appeared to that patriarch, and promised to give the land to his seed. 3. The place where Abram first built an altar to the Lord, and called upon his name, Genesis 12:7. The present name of this city is Neapolis, or Naplouse. See Calmet.

***That Jacob gave to his son Joseph.***— Jacob had bought this field from the children of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of silver, or lambs, Genesis 33:19; and in it he built an altar, which he dedicated to El Elohey Yishrael, the strong God, the covenant God of Israel, Genesis 33:20. This, Jacob left as a private or overplus inheritance to Joseph and his children. See Genesis 48:21, 22, and Joshua 24:32.

**Verse 6. *Jacob's well was there.***— Of this well Mr. Maundrell gives the following account. “About one-third of an hour from Naplosa, the ancient Sychar and Sychem, stood Jacob's well. If it be inquired, whether this be the very place, seeing it may be suspected to stand too remote from Sychar for the women to come and draw water, we may answer—that, in all probability, the city extended farther in former times than it does now, as may be conjectured from some pieces of a very thick wall, the remains perhaps of the ancient Sychem, still to be seen not far from hence. Over it stood formerly a large church, erected by the Empress Irene; but of this the voracity of time, assisted by the hands of the Turks, has left nothing but a few foundations remaining. The well is covered at present with an old stone vault, into which you are let down by a very strait hole; and then, removing a broad flat stone, you discover the well itself. It is dug in a firm rock, is about three yards in diameter, and thirty-five in depth, five of which we found full of water. This confutes a story frequently told to travelers, ‘That it is dry all the year round, except on the anniversary of that day on which our blessed Savior sat upon it; but then bubbles up with

abundance of water.’ At this well the narrow valley of Sychem ends, opening itself into a wide field, which probably is part of the ground given by Jacob to his son Joseph. It is watered by a fresh stream, running between it and Sychem, which makes it exceedingly verdant and fruitful.” See Maundrell’s Travels, 5th edit. p. 62.

Cutting pools, or making wells for public use, renders a man famous among the Hindoos. So this well had the name of Jacob, because he had digged it, and it was for public use.

**Sat thus**— Chrysostom inquires what the particle thus, *οὕτως*, means here? and answers, that it simply signifies, he sat not upon a throne, seat, or cushion; but (as the circumstances of the case required) upon the ground. This is a sense which is given to the word in the ancient Greek writers. See Raphelius, Wetstein, and Pearce. It is probably a mere expletive, and is often so used by Josephus. See several examples in Rosenmuller.

**The sixth hour.**— About twelve o’clock: see the notes on John 1:31. The time is noted here: 1. To account for Christ’s fatigue—he had already traveled several hours. 2. To account for his thirst—the sun had at this time waxed hot. 3. To account for the disciples going to buy food, John 4:8, because this was the ordinary time of dinner among the Jews. See the note referred to above. Dr. Macknight thinks the sixth hour to be the Roman six o’clock in the afternoon. See note on John 1:29.

**Verse 7. *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water***— That this was the employment of the females, we see in different parts of the Sacred Writings. See Genesis 24:11, etc.; Exodus 2:16, and the note at the end of that chapter. The Jews say that those who wished to get wives went to the wells where young women were accustomed to come and draw water; and it is supposed that women of ill fame frequented such places also. See several proofs in Schoettgen.

**Verse 9. *That thou, being a Jew***— Probably the inhabitants of Judea distinguished themselves from those of Samaria by some peculiar mode of dress; and by this the Samaritan woman might have known Christ: but it is likely that our Lord spoke the Galilean dialect, by which we find, from Mark 14:70, a Jew of that district might easily be known.

***The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.***— Perhaps better, Jews have no communion with Samaritans. These words appear to be added by the evangelist himself, in explanation of the woman's question. The original word, **συγχρωταί**, has been variously translated and understood. It comes from **συν**, together, and **χραομαι**, I use, or borrow: hence it has been understood to mean, the Jews will be under no kind of obligation to the Samaritans-will borrow nothing from them-will not drink out of the same cup or well with them-will not sit down to meals with them, nor eat out of the same vessel-will have no religious connection, no commercial dealings with them. The word communion, I think, fully expresses the sense of the original; and, being as extensive in its meaning as our word dealings, is capable of as general an interpretation. The deadly hatred that subsisted between these two nations is known to all. The Jews cursed them, and believed them to be accursed. Their most merciful wish to the Samaritans was, that they might have no part in the resurrection; or, in other words, that they might be annihilated.

**Verse 10. *If thou knewest the gift of God***— **δωρεαν** signifies a free gift. A gift is any thing that is given, for which no equivalent has been or is to be returned: a free gift is that which has been given without asking or entreaty. Such a gift of kindness was Jesus Christ to the world, John 3:16; and through him comes the gift of the Spirit, which those who believe on his name were to receive. Christ was not an object of desire to the world-no man asked for him; and God, moved thereto by his own eternal mercy, freely gave him. Through this great gift comes the Holy Spirit, and all other gifts which are necessary to the salvation of a lost world.

***Living water.***— By this expression, which was common to the inhabitants both of the east and of the west, is always meant spring water, in opposition to dead, stagnant water contained in ponds, pools, tanks, or cisterns; and what our Lord means by it is evidently the Holy Spirit, as may be seen, John 7:38, 39.

As water quenches the thirst, refreshes and invigorates the body, purifies things defiled, and renders the earth fruitful, so it is an apt emblem of the gift of the Holy Ghost, which so satisfies the souls that receive it that they thirst no more for earthly good: it purifies also from all spiritual



defilement, on which account it is emphatically styled the Holy Spirit; and it makes those who receive it fruitful in every good word and work.

**Verse 11. *Thou hast nothing to draw with***— ουτε αντλημα εχεις, Thou hast no bucket. Good water is not plentiful in the east; and travelers are often obliged to carry leathern bottles or buckets with them, and a line also, to let them down into the deep wells, in order to draw up water. If the well was in our Lord's time, as it was found by Mr. Maundrell, thirty-five yards deep, it would require a considerable line to reach it; and with such it is not likely that even the disciples of our Lord were provided. The woman might well say, The well is deep, and thou hast nothing to draw with; whence then hast thou that living water?

**Verse 12. *Our father Jacob***— The ancient Samaritans were undoubtedly the descendants of Jacob; for they were the ten tribes that revolted in the reign of Rehoboam: but those in our Lord's time were not genuine Israelites, but a corrupted race, sprung from a mixture of different nations, sent thither by Salmanezer, king of the Assyrians. See 2 Kings 17:24.

**Verse 14. *Springing up into everlasting life***.— On this account he can never thirst:—for how can he lack water who has in himself a living, eternal spring? By this water our Lord means also his doctrine, explaining and promising the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which proceed from Jesus Christ their fountain, dwelling in a believing heart. There is no eternal life without the Spirit; no Spirit without Christ; and no Christ to give the Spirit, without dwelling in the heart: this his whole doctrine proclaims.

**Verse 15. *Give me this water***— She did not as yet comprehend our Lord's meaning; but her curiosity was much excited, and this was the design of our Lord, that he might have her mind properly prepared to receive the great truths which he was about to announce.

**Verse 16. *Call thy husband***— Our Lord appears to have spoken these words for two purposes: 1. To make the woman consider her own state. 2. To show her that he knew her heart, and the secret actions of her life; and was therefore well qualified to teach her heavenly truths.

**Verse 18. *Thou hast had five husbands***— It is not clear that this woman was a prostitute: she might have been legally married to those five, and might have been divorced through some misbehavior of her own, not

amounting to adultery; for the adulteress was to be put to death, both by the Jewish and Samaritan law, not divorced: or she might have been cast off through some caprice of her husband; for, in the time of our Lord, divorces were very common among the Jews, so that a man put away his wife for any fault. See the note on Matthew 5:31. Some are so very fond of exaggerating that nothing can pass through their hands without an increase: hence Heracleon says she had six husbands, and Jerome modestly gives her twenty-two! *Viginti duos habuisti maritos, et ille a quo sepelieris non est tuus.* “Thou hast had twenty-two husbands and he by whom thou shalt be buried is not thine.” Epist. xi.

***He whom thou now hast is not thy husband***— *νυν ον εχεις, ουκ εστι σου ανηρ.* Bishop Pearce would translate this clause in the following manner: There is no husband whom thou now hast-or, less literally, Thou hast no husband now: probably the meaning is, Thou art contracted to another, but not yet brought home: therefore he is not yet thy husband. See Rosenmuller. Bishop Pearce contends that our Lord did not speak these words to her by way of reproof: Because it is not likely that a woman so far advanced in years as to have had five husbands should have now been found living in adultery with a sixth person. 2. Because it is not likely that our Lord would not, in some part of his discourse, have reproved her for her fornication, especially if guilty of it under such gross circumstances. 3. Nor is it likely that a woman of so bad a life should have had so much influence with the people of her city that they should, on her testimony, John 4:39-42, believe Jesus to be the Messiah. 4. Nor is it at all likely that when a discovery of her guilt was made to her, by one whom she acknowledged to be a prophet, John 4:19, the first thing which came into her thoughts should be the important question in religion, about the place appointed by God for his worship, so warmly contested between the Jews and Samaritans. 5. Nor is it at all probable that a person of such a bad life, without any mentioned sign of repentance, should have been the first (perhaps the only private person) to whom Jesus is recorded as declaring himself to be the Christ, as he does to her, John 4:26.

**Verse 19. *I perceive that thou art a prophet.***— And therefore thought him well qualified to decide the grand question in dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans: but she did not perceive him to be the Messiah.

**Verse 20. *Worshipped in this mountain***— Probably pointing to Mount Gerizim, at the foot of which Sychar was situated. The patriarchs had worshipped here—Jacob builded an altar on this mountain, and worshiped the true God: see Genesis 22:2; 33:20. Thus she could say, Our fathers worshipped in this mountain. On this mountain Sanballat had built them a temple, about 332 years before our Lord's incarnation. See Joseph. Antiq. xi. c. viii. s. 4, and 2 Macc. 6:2.

Many heathens considered particular places as having a peculiar sanctity or fitness, for the worship of their deities, beyond others. Such places abound in Hindostan; and in them they think men ought to worship.

In the Hebrew Pentateuch, Deuteronomy 27:4, etc., where the Israelites are commanded to build an altar on mount EBAL, and offer sacrifices, etc., the Samaritan Pentateuch has GERIZIM instead of Ebal; and Dr. Kennicott strongly contends, Dissert. vol. ii. p. 20, etc., that Gerizim is the genuine reading: but our blessed Lord, by the following answer, shows that the place was a matter of little importance, as the Divine worship was no longer to be confined to either: John 4:21. See the note on Deuteronomy 27:4.

**Verse 21. *The hour cometh***, etc.— The time was now at hand in which the spiritual worship of God was about to be established in the earth, and all the Jewish rites and ceremonies entirely abolished.

***Worship the Father***.— This epithet shows the mild, benignant, and tender nature of the Gospel dispensation. Men are called to worship their heavenly Father, and to consider themselves as his children. In reference to this, our Lord's prayer begins, Our FATHER, who art in heaven, etc. See John 4:23.

**Verse 22. *Ye worship ye know not what***— The Samaritans believed in the same God with the Jews; but, as they rejected all the prophetic writings, they had but an imperfect knowledge of the Deity: besides, as they incorporated the worship of idols with his worship, they might be justly said to worship him whom they did not properly know. See the account of their motley worship, 2 Kings 17:26-34. But after Sanballat had built the temple on Mount Gerizim, the idolatrous worship of the Cutheans and Sapharvites, etc., was entirely laid aside; the same religious service being

performed in the Samaritan temple which was performed in that at Jerusalem.

***We know what we worship***— We Jews acknowledge all the attributes of his nature, and offer to him only the sacrifices prescribed in the law.

***Salvation is of the Jews.***— **εκ των ιουδαιων εστιν**, Salvation is from the Jews. Salvation seems here to mean the Savior, the Messiah, as it does Luke 2:30; Acts 4:12: and so the woman appears to have understood it, John 4:25. The Messiah was to spring from the Jews—from them, the preaching of the Gospel, and the knowledge of the truth, were to go to all the nations of the world. It was to the Jews that the promises were made; and it was in their prophetic Scriptures, which the Samaritans rejected, that Jesus Christ was proclaimed and described. See Isaiah 11:3.

**Verse 23. *The true worshippers shall worship-in spirit***— The worship of the Samaritans was a defective worship—they did not receive the prophetic writings: that of the Jews was a carnal worship, dealing only in the letter, and referring to the spirit and design, which were at a distance, by types and ceremonies. The Gospel of Christ showed the meaning of all these carnal ordinances, and the legal sacrifices, which had all their consummation in his offering of himself: thus a spiritual dispensation took the place of the carnal one which prefigured it. The preaching of the Gospel discovered the true nature of God, of salvation, of the human soul, of earthly and of heavenly things; and, because of this, it is put in opposition to the defective Samaritan worship.

**Verse 24. *God is a Spirit***— This is one of the first, the greatest, the most sublime, and necessary truths in the compass of nature! There is a God, the cause of all things—the fountain of all perfection—without parts or dimensions, for he is ETERNAL—filling the heavens and the earth—pervading, governing, and upholding all things: for he is an infinite SPIRIT! This God can be pleased only with that which resembles himself: therefore he must hate sin and sinfulness; and can delight in those only who are made partakers of his own Divine nature. As all creatures were made by him, so all owe him obedience and reverence; but, to be acceptable to this infinite Spirit, the worship must be of a spiritual nature—must spring from the heart, through the influence of the Holy Ghost: and it must be in TRUTH, not only in sincerity, but performed according to that Divine revelation

which he has given men of himself. A man worships God in spirit, when, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, he brings all his affections, appetites, and desires to the throne of God; and he worships him in truth, when every purpose and passion of his heart, and when every act of his religious worship, is guided and regulated by the word of God. “The enlightened part of mankind,” says Abu’l Fazel, “knows that true righteousness is an upright heart; and believe that God can only be worshipped in holiness of SPIRIT.” Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 254.

“Of all worshippers,” says Creeshna, “I respect him as the most devout, who hath faith in me, and who serveth me with a soul possessed of my spirit.” Geeta, p. 68.

**Verse 25. *I know that Messiah cometh***— Instead of *οιδα* I know, several excellent MSS. and versions read, *οιδαμεν*, we know; as if she had said that all the Samaritans expected the advent of the Messiah. Though they did not receive the prophetic writings, yet the tradition of the advent of the Messiah, which was common among the Jews, and founded on promises contained even in the books of Moses, was generally received among the Samaritans also.

***Which is called Christ***— This appears to be the evangelist’s explanation of the Hebrew word, according to his custom; John 1:38, 41, 42; 9:7, etc.; for we cannot suppose that the woman understood Greek, so as to translate the Hebrew word to our word; or that she should suppose that a person who was a Jew, John 4:9, and a prophet, John 4:19, could stand in need of this interpretation.

***He will tell us all things***.— Relative to the nature of God, the nature of his worship, and the proper place to adore him in. In a word, he will settle the great national question between Gerizim and Ebal; and we shall then know certainly where we ought to worship.

**Verse 26. *Jesus saith unto her, I-am he***.— Our Lord never spoke in such direct terms concerning himself to his own countrymen; nor even to his own disciples, till a little before his death. The reason given by Bishop Pearce is the following: The woman being alone when Jesus said it, and being a Samaritan, he had no reason to apprehend that the Samaritans, if they knew his claim, would disturb his ministry before the time of his

suffering came; which seems to have been the reason why he concealed it so long from his own countrymen.

**Verse 27. *Came his disciples***— From the town, whither they went to buy food, John 4:8.

***Marveled that he talked with the woman***— Because it was contrary to the custom of the eastern countries; and there are many canons, among the rabbins, against it. To the present time, if a man meet even his own wife in the street, he does not speak to her; and this is done to keep up the appearance of a chastity and temperance of which the eastern world knows nothing. They might wonder how a Samaritan, in whom they could expect no spirituality, could listen to the conversation of their Master, who never spake but about heavenly things.

***Yet no man said***, etc.— They were awed by his majesty, and knew that he must have sufficient reasons to induce him to act a part to which he was not at all accustomed. A great man has said, “Converse sparingly, if at all, with women; and never alone.” Every minister of the Gospel will do well to attend to this advice.

**Verse 28. *Left her waterpot***— She was so penetrated with the great truths which Jesus had announced that she forgot her errand to the well, and returned to the city without the water for which she came out!

**Verse 29. *All things that ever I did***— The Jews believed that one essential characteristic of the Messiah would be, that he should be able to tell the secrets of all hearts. This they believed was predicted, Isaiah 11:2, 3.

When the famous impostor Barchochab, who rose up under the empire of Adrian, about a hundred years after the incarnation, professed himself to be the Messiah, after having been deceived by him for two years, they at last thought of putting his divinity to proof on this ground: they brought before him persons whom he did not know, some of whom were very vicious, and others of a different character; they desired him to point out who were the righteous, and who were the wicked; which when he could not do, they rose up and put him to death. Lamentations Bible de Martin.

**Verse 30. *They went out of the city***— Such effect had the simple testimony of the woman on their minds.

***And came unto him.***— Or, Were coming to him; for they did not reach him immediately; all that discourse between him and his disciples, mentioned John 4:31-39, inclusive, having taken place before the people of Sychar got to the well. See John 4:40.

**Verse 31. *Master, eat.***— They knew that he was greatly spent both with hunger and fatigue.

**Verse 32. *I have meat to eat that ye know not of.***— Our blessed Lord seizes every opportunity to raise the minds of his apostles to heavenly things, through the medium of earthly matters. Nor does he force these things into such service. Properly understood, earthly substances are the types, representatives, and shadows of heavenly things.

**Verse 33. *Hath any man brought him aught to eat?***— Has he got food in any preternatural way? They could not help remembering the miraculous interventions of Divine providence in feeding Elijah by the ravens, at the brook Cherith, 1 Kings 17:4-6, and by the ministry of an angel, 1 Kings 19:5-8, and our Lord's preternatural repast in the wilderness, after his victory over Satan, Matthew 4:11.

**Verse 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me***— In these words, our blessed Lord teaches a lesson of zeal and earnestness to his apostles, and to all their successors in the Christian ministry. Let the salvation of souls lie nearer your heart than life itself. Let eating and drinking, labor and rest, reading, thinking, study, prayer, and all things, be directed to the accomplishment of this great work. Ministers of Jesus! imitate your Lord! Souls are perishing for lack of knowledge-God has given you the key of the kingdom, the knowledge of his word-O open unto them the gate of life! They are dropping by thousands into hell! O pluck the brands out of the burning!

**Verse 35. *There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?***— In Palestine, the harvest did not begin till after the passover, which was fixed on the 14th of the month Nisan, which answers to our March, and sometimes extends into April. The barley harvest was the first; after that the wheat; and both were finished by Pentecost. For, in the feast of

Pentecost, the first fruits of all the harvest were carried to the temple, and waved before the Lord. See Leviticus 23:11. The four months, of which our Lord speaks here, must be computed, according to M. Toynard, from Shebat, which was the eleventh month of the sacred year, and which commenced that year on the 13th of January: from that, till the beginning of the wheat harvest, which began about a month after the passover, there were exactly four months. The passover was that year on the 15th of Nisan, or March 28; and Pentecost took place on the 17th of May. We may therefore suppose that it was about the 13th of January, or beginning of the month Shebat, that John the Baptist was cast into prison, and that Christ retired into Galilee. The fixing of this epoch is of considerable importance. See Calmet's Com. on this place.

The following method of dividing the seasons among the Jews is thus stated in Bava Metsia, fol. 106. "Half Tisri, all Marheshvan, and half Cisleu, is זרע zera. SEED-TIME. Half Cisleu, whole Tebeth, and half Shebat, is חורף choreph, WINTER. Half Shebat, whole Adar, and half Nisan, is קור kor, the WINTER SOLSTICE. Half Nisan, all Ijar, and half Sivan, is קציר katsir, HARVEST. Half Sivan, all Tammuz, and half Ab, is קייץ kyits, SUMMER. Half Ab, all Elul, and half Tisri, is חום chum, the great HEAT." The Jews sowed wheat and spelt in Tisri and Marheshvan; and barley in Shebat and Adar. Now let us reckon τετραμήνον, the four months, backwards, from the beginning of the barley harvest, or the middle of the month Nisan, and we shall go back to the middle of the month Cisleu, which will fall in with the beginning of our December, whence it will be easy to conjecture what feast that was, mentioned John 5:1, viz. the passover. See Lightfoot; and see the note on John 5:1.

After all that learned men have said on this passage, it does not appear that our Lord meant any thing by it more than an illustration of his present subject. Though there were ordinarily four months from seed-time to harvest, and that a man, after he had sowed his seed, must wait patiently till the regular and natural harvest came, yet it was not the case now: the seed of life which he had sown but a few hours ago had already brought forth much fruit; therefore he says, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, over which it is likely the Samaritans were then coming in troops,



guided by the woman who had already received the light of the Gospel of peace.

*The fields-are white already to harvest.*— Multitudes of Samaritans are coming to believe on me, and to be saved unto eternal life. Probably they had a kind of white raiment.

**Verse 36.** *And he that reapeth receiveth wages*— Or, And already the reaper receiveth wages. By making the word  $\eta\delta\eta$ , already, the beginning of this verse, on the authority of some excellent MSS. and versions, a more consistent sense is obtained than from the common arrangement, where  $\eta\delta\eta$  terminates the preceding verse.

Already the heavenly sower, Jesus Christ, becomes the reaper of the produce of the seed which he had so lately sown; and receives the wages which he desired, the high gratification of saving immortal souls; and gathers in his fruit unto eternal life. So the sower and the reaper, who are here one and the same person, rejoiced together, having seen the seed time and the harvest take place on the same day. The sower had not time to leave the field which he had sown, till it was full time to gather in the harvest!

**Verse 37.** *Herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.*— Or, One is the sower, and another is the reaper. In what respects you, of this business, this proverb is true—One is the sower, etc., for I have sent you to reap, to preach my Gospel, and gain converts, where ye have not labored—have not sown the first seeds of eternal life. Others have labored—the patriarchs and prophets, and ye are entered into the fruits of their labors. They announced the Messiah who was to come, and the expectation of the people was excited, and they longed for his appearance; but they were gathered to their fathers before they could see the fruit of their labor. You are come to tell the people that the kingdom of God is among them, and that God has visited his people.

The proverb which our Lord mentions above was taken from what ordinarily happens in the course of the Divine providence, where one takes a great deal of pains to procure that of which another reaps the benefit. See instances of this proverb, Leviticus 26:16: Ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. Micah 6:15: Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt

not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but not anoint thee with the oil. See also Hosea 7:9. The Greeks had the same proverb: *ἄλλοι μὲν σπερουσι, ἄλλοι δ' ἄν ἀμησονται*. So had the Latins: *Aliis leporem excitasti*. You have beat the bush, and another has found the hare. See the famous verses of Virgil beginning with, *Sic vos non vobis*, in which the fowls, the sheep, the bees, and the oxen, are elegantly brought in as illustrations of the propriety of the proverb.

*Sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves.*  
*Sic vos non vobis vellera fertis oves.*  
*Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes.*  
*Sic vos non vobis fertis aratra boves.*

*So you, ye birds, of wondrous skill possest,*  
*Not for yourselves construct the curious nest.*  
*So you, ye sheep, who roam the verdant field,*  
*Not for yourselves your snowy fleeces yield,*

*So you, ye bees, who every flower explore,*  
*Not for yourselves amass the honied store.*  
*So you, ye patient kine, inured to toil,*  
*Not for yourselves subdue the stubborn soil!*

Bishop Pearce gives this text a remarkable turn. The verse he translates thus: I sent you away, that ye might reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; i.e. I did not send you to the city (John 4:8) for this purpose only, that ye might buy meat; but I sent you away chiefly with this intent, that there might be a harvest for you to reap upon your return; though you sowed no seed, and bestowed no labor for that purpose. While you were gone, I sowed spiritual seed in the heart of a Samaritan woman; and she is gone, and is about to return with many of her city, whom she has brought to believe, (John 4:39-42.) These, and the many more which will believe upon hearing my doctrine, (John 4:41,) will all be a harvest arising out of the seed which I sowed in your absence, and on which, therefore, ye bestowed no labor. He farther adds, that the Greek *θεριζειν*, stands for *του θεριζειν*, and such expressions are often used to signify, not the end and design, but the event only. Pearce's Comment.

**Verse 39.** *Many of the Samaritans-believed on him for the saying of the woman*— This woman was the first apostle of Christ in Samaria! She went and told her fellow citizens that the Messiah was come; and gave for proof, that he had told her the most secret things she had ever done: see on

John 4:29. This word, which is twice repeated, in John 4:29 and here, strongly intimates that a more particular conversation had taken place, between our Lord and the Samaritan woman, than what is here related.

**Verse 40. *He abode there two days.***— We are not told that he wrought any miracles among them; this does not appear to have been necessary: they were a simple-hearted, teachable people, and they credited him on the evidence of his own eternal truth. Why are not miracles wrought now? Miracles were only for the establishment of the doctrines of Christianity, where they were first preached; we profess to believe these doctrines; therefore, to us, miracles would be useless. Where the doctrine is credited, no miracle is necessary: the Samaritans believed, and no miracle was wrought among them; for the simple reason, it was not necessary.

**Verse 42. *We have heard him ourselves***— On seeing and hearing our Lord, the faith of those who had already believed on the woman's testimony was abundantly confirmed; and, besides those, many others believed who had not heard the woman speak.

***This is indeed the Christ***— The promised Messiah.

***The Savior of the world.***— Not of the Jews only, but of the Samaritans, and of the whole Gentile world.

**Verse 43. *Went into Galilee.***— Bishop Pearce thinks that some words have been lost from the end of this verse, which may be supplied thus: Went into Galilee, but not to Nazareth; for Jesus himself had declared, etc. In Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:4, and Luke 4:24, which are the only texts where Jesus is said to have declared this, he always spake of Nazareth only, and not of Galilee in general, a country where he lived for the most part, and wrought the greatest number of his miracles, and made the most converts.

**Verse 44. *Jesus himself testified***— He bore testimony to the general truth of the following proverb. See on Matthew 13:57.

**Verse 45. *The Galileans received him***— They received him as the promised Messiah, because of the miracles which they had seen him perform at Jerusalem, at the Passover. See John 2:23.

**Verse 46. *Where he made the water wine.***— See the notes on John 2:1, etc. Cana was on the road from Nazareth to Capernaum and the Sea of Tiberias.

***A certain nobleman***— An officer of the king's court: for this is the meaning of the original word, βασιλικος, which the Vulgate translates regulus, a little king. This officer belonged to Herod Antipas, who was then tetrarch of Galilee. Jerome calls him Palatinus, and says he was an officer of the king's palace. Others think it was Chuza, mentioned Luke 8:3; and others think it was Manaen, spoken of Acts 13:1. One of these opinions may be true, but all solid proof is wanting. This officer, whoever he was, appears to have had his ordinary abode at Capernaum, and hearing that Christ was at Cana, he came express from Capernaum thither, to entreat him to heal his child.

**Verse 48. *Except ye see signs and wonders,*** etc.— Our Lord does not tell this man that he had no faith, but that he had not enough. If he had had none, he would not have come from Capernaum to Cana, to beg him to heal his son. If he had had enough, he would have been contented with recommending his son to our Lord, without entreating him to go to Capernaum to heal him; which intimates that he did not believe our Lord could do it at a distance. But the words are not addressed to the nobleman alone, but to all the Galilean Jews in general; for our Lord uses the plural number, which he never does when addressing an individual. These people differed widely from the people of Sychar: they had neither a love of the truth, nor simplicity of heart; and would not believe any thing from heaven, unless forced on their minds by the most striking miracles. They were favored with the ministry of John Baptist; but, as that was not accompanied with miracles, it was not generally credited. They require the miracles of Christ, in order that they may credit the advent of the Messiah. There are many like these Galileans still in the world: they deny that God can have any influence among men; and as to the operations of the Holy Spirit, they, in the genuine Galilean spirit, boldly assert that they will not credit any man who professes to be made a partaker of them, unless he work a miracle in proof of his pretensions! These persons should know that the grace of working miracles was very different from that by which a man is saved; and that the former might exist, even in the most astonishing measure, where the latter did not. See 1 Corinthians 13:2.

**Verse 49. *Sir, come down***, etc.— He did not think our Lord could cure him without being present, and seems here to feel himself hurt, because our Lord did not come at his first entreaty. It is difficult for a proud man, or a man in office, to humble himself, or to treat even God Almighty with proper respect. The spirit of this man seems not much unlike to that of Naaman the Syrian, 2 Kings 5:11.

**Verse 50. *Go thy way; thy son liveth***.— Had our Lord gone with him, as he wished, his unbelief could not have been fully removed; as he would have still thought that our Lord's power could not reach from Cana to Capernaum: in order to destroy his unbelief at once, and bring him into the fullness of the faith of his supreme power, he cures him, being apparently absent, by that energy through which he fills both the heavens and the earth. Here it may be observed, our blessed Lord did what this man requested him to do, but not in the way in which he wished it to be done. God will save all to the uttermost who call upon him, but not in the way in which they may desire. Eternal life is the free gift of God, and he has a right to give it as he pleases; and he always gives his gifts in that way in which his glory is best promoted, and our eternal interest secured.

***The man believed the word***— And yet it appears that he had suspended his faith upon a certain condition: "If I find on my return that my son is healed, I will believe that Jesus is the Messiah."

**Verse 52. *Then inquired he of them the hour***— The servants, overjoyed to find their master's son so suddenly restored, set off to meet him, that they might impart to him tidings which they knew would be so very agreeable; and he, intent on having his faith settled, began immediately to inquire what time it was when the fever left him, to see whether his cure was the effect of some natural cause, or whether it was done by the power of Christ.

***Yesterday at the seventh hour***— At the time we would call one o'clock. Dr. Macknight thinks the Roman hour is intended; i.e. seven o'clock in the evening; and this he thinks is the reason why our Lord did not accompany the nobleman: for, as Cana was a day's journey from Capernaum, had our Lord gone at that hour he must have traveled in the night, from which it might have been inferred that he could not cure the child without being personally present. Harmony, vol. i. p. 52.

**Verse 53. *So the father knew***— He had the fullest proof that his son's cure was supernatural, and that it was wrought by the Lord Jesus.

***Himself believed, and his whole house.***— He and his whole family became true converts to the doctrine of the manifested Messiah. The whole family, impressed with the great kindness of God in sending health to the child, were the more easily led to believe in the Lord Jesus. The sickness of the child became the mean of salvation to all the household. They, no doubt, thought at first that God was dealing hardly with them, when threatening to remove the child; but now they see that in very faithfulness God had afflicted them. Let us learn never to murmur against God, or think that he does not act kindly towards us. His wisdom cannot permit him to err; his goodness will not suffer him to do any thing to his creatures but what may be subservient to their best interests. By providential occurrences, apparently the most adverse, he may be securing our eternal salvation.

There is an account in Beracoth, fol. 34, very similar to this of the evangelist, and very possibly stolen from this holy source. "When the son of Rab. Gamaliel fell sick, he sent two of his disciples to R. Chanina, that he would pray to God for him. When he had seen them, he went on the roof of his house and prayed for him. He then came down and said to them, His fever has departed from him. They said unto him, Art thou a prophet? He answered, I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but when I can recite my prayers readily, I know I shall be heard. They then wrote down the hour; and, when they returned to R. Gamaliel, he said to them, Ye have fulfilled your ministry—in respect to my son, all is complete. In that hour the fever (חמא *chomah*, ο πυρετος) left him, and he desired water to drink." Schoettgen very properly remarks, Ovum ovo non magis simile est, atque haec fabula narrationi evangelicae. "One egg is not more like to another, than this fable to the evangelical narration."

**Verse 54. *This-second miracle***— The first miracle which Christ performed was in this same city of Cana, just after his baptism; and this second took place after his arrival here from Jerusalem, whence, we have seen, he was driven by the persecution raised against him by the scribes and Pharisees. By construing the word παλιν, again, with ελθων, he

came, that confusion which is evident in the common version is entirely removed.

Bishop Pearce says: “It seems probable to me that John, when he wrote this verse, either joined the word *παλιν* to *ελθων*, as he had done in John 4:46, or meant that it should be so joined in the construction.”

John does not mention here the miracles which our Lord did at Capernaum on his first journey, John 2:11, nor those which he did at Jerusalem on the feast of the passover. See John 2:12; Luke 4:23.

THERE are several particulars in the preceding history of the Samaritan woman which confirm the doctrine of a particular providence, and show how God manages the most common occurrences in order to accomplish the designs of his mercy and love.

The Gospel must be preached to the Samaritans: this is God’s purpose; and in this case, the wrath of man is caused to praise him.

1. Christ finds it necessary to quit Judea because of the persecution raised up against him by the scribes and Pharisees, John 4:1-3. How worthy of admiration is that Divine providence that presses every thing into the accomplishment of its own designs! The doctors of Jerusalem oblige the Savior to leave their city; and a simple woman persuades all the inhabitants of a Samaritan city to open their gates and their hearts, and entreat the Redeemer of the world to enter in.

2. Christ must pass through Samaria, John 4:4. He was so situated in Judea that he could not reach Galilee except through Samaria, without taking a large circuit, which the necessities of the present case could not admit. Thus, while he appears to fly only from the fury of his persecutors, he is in reality seeking the lost, and fully accomplishing the work he came into the world to perform.

3. Christ being weary finds it necessary to sit down to rest himself by Jacob’s well, John 4:5, 6, spent with fatigue and hunger. How energetic was this fatigue? how active was this rest! Nothing can happen to Christ in vain-nothing can turn him out of the way of his mercy-his great work he continues to carry on, without the smallest interruption, where we would have thought it must have been necessarily suspended.

4. The disciples are obliged to go to the city to buy victuals, John 4:8, and Jesus was left alone. Even this circumstance was not only favorable to the conversion of the Samaritan woman, but even essentially necessary, as, without it, she could not have had that opportunity of conversing freely with our Lord; nor would it have been proper for him to have made that discovery of himself, in their presence, which we find he did during their absence. See the note on John 4:26.
5. The Samaritan woman is induced at that very time to go and draw water. Even so small a circumstance as this becomes a necessary part in the economy of her salvation. There is not a circumstance in our life not an occurrence in our business, but God will make it subservient to our salvation, if we have a simple heart and a teachable spirit. The steps of a good man especially are ordered of the Lord; and, while he acknowledges his Maker in all his ways, he will direct all his steps. A proper consideration of this great truth will produce both confidence and humility.
6. But this blessed doctrine may be abused; for some may suppose that God always acts according to a fixed necessity, through which, whatsoever was, is, or will be, has had its existence, mode of being, operation, and direction, according to predetermined irrevocable laws. This system makes God himself the necessary agent of eternal fate, as it supposes him to be constantly employed in doing what eternal necessity obliges him to perform; and thus his infinite freedom is bounded or acted upon by uncontrollable necessity. Perdition is not farther from glory than necessitating decrees are from a particular and gracious providence, by which the means of salvation are placed within the reach of every human being.



## CHAPTER 5.

*The man who had been diseased thirty-eight years healed on the Sabbath day, 1-9. The Jews cavil, persecute Christ, and seek to kill him, because he had done this cure on the Sabbath, 10-16. Our Lord vindicates his conduct, and shows, from the testimony of the Father, the Scriptures, John the Baptist, and his own works, that he came from God, to be the light and salvation of the world, 17-39. He reproves the Jews for their obstinacy, 40; hatred to God, 41, 42; pride, 43, 44; and disbelief of their own law, 45-47.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

**Verse 1. A feast**— This is generally supposed, by the best critics, to have been the feast of the passover, which was the most eminent feast among the Jews. In several excellent MSS. the article is added, **ἡ εορτή**, THE feast, the grand, the principal festival. Petavius supposes that the feast of Purim, or lots, is here meant; and one MS. reads **ἡ σκηνοπηγία**, the feast of Tabernacles. Several of the primitive fathers believe Pentecost to be intended; and they are followed by many of the moderns, because, in John 7:2, mention is made of the feast of Tabernacles, which followed Pentecost, and was about the latter end of our September; and, in John 10:22, mention is made of the feast of Dedication, which was held about the latter end of November. See Bp. Pearce. See John 10:22.

Calmet, however, argues that there is no other feast with which all the circumstances marked here so well agree as with the passover; and Bp. Newcome, who is of Calmet's opinion, thinks Bp. Pearce's argument concerning the succession of the feasts to be inconclusive; because it is assumed, not proved, that the three feasts which he mentions above must have happened in the same year. See much on the same subject in Bp. Newcome's notes to his Harmony, p. 15, etc.

Lightfoot has observed, that the other evangelists speak very sparingly of our Lord's acts in Judea. They mention nothing of the passovers, from our Lord's baptism till his death, excepting the very last: but John points at

them all. The first he speaks of, John 2:13; the third, John 6:4; the fourth, John 13:1; and the second in this place: for although he does not call it the passover, but a feast in general, yet the circumstances agree best with this feast; and our Lord's words, John 4:35, seem to cast light on this subject. See the note there.

**Verse 2. *There Is***— This is thought by some to be a proof that John wrote his Gospel before the destruction of Jerusalem; and that the pool and its porticoes were still remaining. Though there can be little doubt that Jerusalem was destroyed many years before John wrote, yet this does not necessarily imply that the pool and its porticoes must have been destroyed too. It, or something in its place, is shown to travelers to the present day. See Maundrell's Jour. p. 108. But instead of *ἔστι*, Is, both the Syriac, all the Arabic, Persic, Armenian, and Nonnus, read *ἦν*, WAS; which is to me some proof that it did not exist when these versions were made, and that the pool which is shown now is not the original.

***By the sheep market***— Rather, gate: see Nehemiah 3:1, 32; 12:39. This was in all probability the gate through which the sheep were brought which were offered in sacrifice in the temple.

***A pool***— Bp. Pearce thinks the word *κολυμβηθρα* should be translated bath, and that this place was built for the purpose of bathing and swimming in. He observes that *κολυμβαν* signifies to swim, in Acts 27:43. In proof of this, he cites three of the old Itala, which have natatoria, a bathing or swimming place.

***Bethesda***— This word is variously written in the MSS. and versions: Bezatha-Bethzatha-Betzetha-Belzetha-Belzatha-Berzeta; and many have Bethsaida. But the former reading is the genuine one. Bethesda, or according to the Hebrew *בֵּית חַסְדָּה* Bethchasadah, signifies literally, the house of mercy. It got this name probably from the cures which God mercifully performed there. It is likely the porticoes were built for the more convenient reception of the poor and distressed, who came hither to be healed. It does not appear that any person was obliged to pay man for what the mercy of God freely gave. Wicked as the Jewish people were, they never thought of levying a tax on the poor and afflicted, for the cures they received in these healing waters. How is it that a well-regulated state, such as that of Great Britain, can ever permit individuals or corporations

to enrich themselves at the expense of God's mercy, manifested in the sanative waters of Bristol, Bath, Buxton, etc.? Should not the accommodations be raised at the expense of the public, that the poor might enjoy without cost, which they are incapable of defraying, the great blessing which the God of nature has bestowed on such waters? In most of those places there is a profession that the poor may drink and bathe gratis; but it is little better than a pretense, and the regulations relative to this point render the whole nearly inefficient. However, some good is done.

**Verse 3. *Blind, halt, withered***— To these the Codex Bezae, three copies of the Itala, and both the Persic, add *παραλυτικων*, paralytic; but they are probably included among the withered.

***Waiting for the moving of the water.***— This clause, with the whole of the fourth verse, is wanting in some MSS. and versions; but I think there is no sufficient evidence against their authenticity. Griesbach seems to be of the same opinion; for though he has marked the whole passage with the notes of doubtfulness, yet he has left it in the text. Some have imagined that the sanative virtue was communicated to the waters by washing in them the entrails of the beasts which were offered in sacrifice; and that the angel meant no more than merely a man sent to stir up from the bottom this corrupt sediment, which, being distributed through the water, the pores of the person who bathed in it were penetrated by this matter, and his disorder repelled! But this is a miserable shift to get rid of the power and goodness of God, built on the merest conjectures, self-contradictory, and every way as unlikely as it is insupportable. It has never yet been satisfactorily proved that the sacrifices were ever washed; and, could even this be proved, who can show that they were washed in the pool of Bethesda? These waters healed a man in a moment of whatsoever disease he had. Now, there is no one cause under heaven that can do this. Had only one kind of disorders been cured here, there might have been some countenance for this deistical conjecture—but this is not the case; and we are obliged to believe the relation just as it stands, and thus acknowledge the sovereign power and mercy of God, or take the desperate flight of an infidel, and thus get rid of the passage altogether.

**Verse 4. *Angel***— “Of the Lord,” is added by AKL, about 20 others, the Aethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, Anglo-Saxon, and six copies of

the Itala: Cyril and Ambrose have also this reading. If this reading be genuine, and the authorities which support it are both ancient and respectable, it destroys Dr. Hammond's conjecture, that, by the angel, a messenger only, sent from the Sanhedrin, is meant, and that these cures were all performed in a natural way.

Those who feel little or none of the work of God in their own hearts are not willing to allow that he works in others. Many deny the influences of God's Spirit, merely because they never felt them. This is to make any man's experience the rule by which the whole word of God is to be interpreted; and consequently to leave no more divinity in the Bible than is found in the heart of him who professes to explain it.

***Went down***— **κατεβαινεν**, descended. The word seems to imply that the angel had ceased to descend when John wrote. In the second verse, he spoke of the pool as being still in existence; and in this verse he intimates that the Divine influence ceased from these waters. When it began, we know not; but it is likely that it continued no longer than till the crucifixion of our Lord. Some think that this never took place before nor after this time. Neither Josephus, Philo, nor any of the Jewish authors mention this pool; so that it is very likely that it had not been long celebrated for its healing virtue, and that nothing of it remained when those authors wrote.

***Certain season***— This probably refers to the time of the feast, during which only this miraculous virtue lasted. It is not likely that the angel appeared to the people-his descent might be only known by the ebullition caused in the waters. Was not the whole a type Of Christ? See Zechariah 13:1. He is the true Bethesda, or house of mercy, the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness; unto which all the diseased may come, and find health and life eternal.

**Verse 5. *Had an infirmity thirty and eight years.***— St. Chrysostom conjectured that blindness was the infirmity of this person: what it was, the inspired writer does not say-probably it was a palsy: his case was deplorable-he was not able to go into the pool himself, and he had no one to help him; so that poverty and disease were here connected. The length of the time he had been afflicted makes the miracle of his cure the greater. There could have been no collusion in this case: as his affliction had lasted

thirty-eight years, it must have been known to multitudes; therefore he could not be a person prepared for the occasion. All Christ's miracles have been wrought in such a way, and on such persons and occasions, as absolutely to preclude all possibility of the suspicion of imposture.

**Verse 6. *Wilt thou be made whole?***— Christ, by asking this question, designed to excite in this person faith, hope, and a greater desire of being healed. He wished him to reflect on his miserable state, that he might be the better prepared to receive a cure, and to value it when it came. Addresses of this kind are always proper from the preachers of the Gospel, that the hearts, as well of hardened as of desponding sinners, may be stirred up to desire and expect salvation. Do you wish to be healed? Do you know that you are under the power of a most inveterate and dangerous disease? If so, there is a remedy—have immediate recourse to the physician. Questions of this kind are frequently asked in the secret of our souls, by the inspirations of God's Spirit. Happy those who pay attention to them, and give right answers.

**Verse 7. *Sir, I have no man***— *οχι, κυριε*—"Yes, sir; but I have no man:"—this is the reading of C\*GH, fourteen others, both the Syriac, later Persic, Arabic, and Chrysostom. Reader, be thankful to God for health and outward comforts. When long affliction has been allied to deep poverty, how deplorable is the state!

**Verse 8. *Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.***— Jesus speaks here as God. He speaks in no name but his own, and with an authority which belongs to God alone. And what is the consequence? The man became whole immediately; and this sudden restoration to health and strength was an incontestable proof of the omnipotence of Christ. It has been remarked, that our Lord, after having performed a miracle, was accustomed to connect some circumstance with it, which attested its truth. After the miracle of the five loaves, he ordered the fragments to be collected, which were more in quantity than the loaves themselves, though several thousands had been fed. When he changed the water into wine, he ordered some to be taken first to the steward of the feast, that he might taste and bear testimony to its genuineness and excellency. When he cured the lepers, he commanded them to show themselves to the priests, whose business it was to judge of the cure. So here, he judged it necessary, after

having cured this infirm man, to order him not only to arise, but to take up his bed, and walk, which sufficiently attested the miracle which he had wrought. God's work is ever known by its excellence and good effects.

The bed of a poor Hindoo is seldom any thing besides a single mat, or a cloth as thick as a bed-quilt. Men carrying such beds may be seen daily on the highways.

**Verse 9. *The same day was the sabbath.***— Mr. Toynard supposes that this miracle was wrought on the 11th of Nisan, the sabbath before the passover, which was celebrated the 14th of Nisan, or 28th of March. But why did our Lord command this man to carry his bed on the sabbath, as the law prohibited all servile work, and especially the carrying of burthens? See Exodus 20:8; Jeremiah 17:21; Nehemiah 13:15. To this it may be answered, 1. The man was a poor man, and if he had left his bed he might have lost it; and he could not have conveniently watched it till the next morning. Christ showed by this that he was Lord of the sabbath: see Matthew 12:8. 3. This was not contrary to the spirit of the law: the sabbath was made to honor God in, and this was a public monument of his power and goodness. 4. It was consistent with the wisdom of Christ to do his miracles so that they might be seen and known by a multitude of people, and especially in Jerusalem, which was the capital of the country, and the center of the Jewish religion; and this very circumstance of the healed man carrying his bed on the sabbath day must call the attention of many to this matter, and cause the miracle to be more generally known.

**Verse 11. *He that made me whole,*** etc.— The poor man reasoned conclusively:—He who could work such a miracle must be at least the best of men: now a good man will neither do evil himself, nor command others to do it: but he who cured me ordered me to carry my bed; therefore, there can be no evil in it.

**Verse 13. *Jesus had conveyed himself away***— Or, had withdrawn himself. And this he might easily do, as there was a crowd in the place. Some think the words indicate, that Jesus withdrew on seeing a multitude in the place, i.e. raising a tumult, because of the man's carrying his bed. See the margin. He had not yet finished his work, and would not expose himself to the envy and malice of the Jewish rulers.

**Verse 14. *Jesus findeth him in the temple***— The man being conscious that it was through the mercy of God that he was restored, (though he did not as yet know distinctly who Christ was,) went to the temple to return thanks to God for his cure. Whether this was on the same day, or some other, does not distinctly appear: it was probably the same day, after he had carried home his couch. How many, when they are made well, forget the hand that has healed them, and, instead of gratitude and obedience to God, use their renewed health and strength in the service of sin! Those who make this use of God's mercies may consider their restoration as a respite only from perdition.

***Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.***— Our Lord, intending to discover to this man who he was, gave him two proofs of the perfection of his knowledge. 1. He showed him that he knew the secret of the past-sin no more: thereby intimating that his former sins were the cause of his long affliction. 2. He showed him that he knew the future—lest a worse thing come unto thee: if thy iniquity be repeated, thy punishment will be increased.

**Verse 15. *The man departed, and told the Jews***— He did not say it was Jesus who had ordered him to carry his bed, but it was Jesus who had cured him; and he left them to draw the inference, viz. That this Jesus must be the miraculous power of God.

**Verse 16. *And sought to slay him***— This clause is omitted by BCDL, some others, and several ancient versions. Griesbach has left it out of the text; and Professor White says, certissime delenda: but it does not appear to me that it should be omitted. However, it was true of the Jews, whether the words were originally in the evangelist or not. For what cause did these persons seek to destroy our Lord? Because he had healed a poor man, who had been diseased thirty-eight years, and ordered him to carry home the couch on which he lay! How implacable must their malice have been! The spirit of religious persecution has always been the most fell and dangerous of all on this side perdition. Every other disposition appears to have its moderator; but this is wholly abandoned to the guidance of Satan, and has for its objects the men who know the truth, and who live to the glory of their God, and for the benefit of mankind. How strange that such should

ever be objects of malice and hatred! But the Satanic nature in fallen man is ever opposed to whatever comes from God.

**Verse 17. *My Father worked hitherto, and I work.***— Or, As my Father worketh until now, etc., *καθως* being understood. God created the world in six days: on the seventh he rested from all creating acts, and set it apart to be an everlasting memorial of his work. But, though he rested from creating, he never ceased from preserving and governing that which he had formed: in this respect he can keep no sabbaths; for nothing can continue to exist, or answer the end proposed by the Divine wisdom and goodness, without the continual energy of God. So I work-I am constantly employed in the same way, governing and supporting all things, comforting the wretched, and saving the lost; and to me, in this respect, there is no sabbath.

**Verse 18. *Making himself equal with God.***— This the Jews understood from the preceding verse: nor did they take a wrong meaning out of our Lord's words; for he plainly stated that, whatever was the Father's work, his was the same; thus showing that He and the Father were ONE. They had now found out two pretenses to take away his life: one was that he had broken the Sabbath-*ελευε*, dissolved, as they pretended, the obligation of keeping it holy. The other was that he was guilty of blasphemy, in making himself equal to God: for both which crimes, a man, according to the law, must suffer death. See Numbers 15:32; Leviticus 24:11, 14, 16.

**Verse 19. *The Son can do nothing of himself***— Because of his inseparable union with the Father: nor can the Father do any thing of himself, because of his infinite unity with the Son.

***What things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son***— God does nothing but what Christ does. What God does is the work of God, and proper to no creature-Jesus does whatsoever God does, and therefore is no created being. The Son can do nothing but what he sees the Father do: now, any intelligent creature may do what God cannot do: he may err-he may sin. If Jesus can do nothing but what God does, then he is no creature-he can neither sin nor err, nor act imperfectly. The conclusion from our Lord's argument is: If I have broken the Sabbath, so has God also; for I can do nothing but what I see him doing. He is ever governing and preserving; I am ever employed in saving.



**Verse 20. *Greater works than these***— Two of these he immediately mentions: Raising the dead, John 5:21. And judging the world, John 5:22.

***That ye may marvel.***— Or, So as to make you wonder. Our Lord sometimes speaks of himself as God, and sometimes as the ambassador of God. As he had a human and Divine nature, this distinction was essentially necessary. Many errors have originated from want of attention to this circumstance.

**Verse 21. *As the Father raised up the dead***— This he did in the case of the widow's son at Sarepta, 1 Kings 17:22, by the ministry of the Prophet Elijah. And again, in the case of the Shunamite's son, 2 Kings 4:32-35, by the ministry of the Prophet Elisha.

***The Son quickeneth whom he will.***— He raiseth from death to life whomsoever he pleases. So he did, for he raised the ruler's daughter, Mark 5:35-42; the widow's son at Nain, Luke 7:11-15; and Lazarus, at Bethany, John 11:14-44.

Whom he will. Here our Lord points out his sovereign power and independence; he gives life according to his own will—not being obliged to supplicate for the power by which it was done, as the prophets did; his own will being absolute and sufficient in every case.

**Verse 22. *The Father judgeth no man***— This confirms what he had said before, John 5:17, 19, that the Father acts not without the Son, nor the Son without the Father; their acts are common, their power equal.

**Verse 23. *That all men should honor the Son***, etc.— If then the Son is to be honored, EVEN AS the Father is honored, then the Son must be God, as receiving that worship which belongs to God alone. To worship any creature is idolatry: Christ is to be honored even as the Father is honored; therefore Christ is not a creature; and, if not a creature, consequently the Creator. See John 1:3.

***He that honoureth not the Son***— God will not receive that man's adoration who refuses to honor Jesus, even as he honors him. The Jews expected the Messiah as a great and powerful Prince; but they never thought of a person coming in that character enrobed with all the attributes

of Godhead. To lead them off from this error, our Lord spoke the words recorded in these verses.

**Verse 24. *He that heareth my word***— My doctrine-and believeth on him that sent me-he who credits my Divine mission, that I am come to give light and life to the world by my doctrine and death-hath eternal life-the seed of this life is sown in his heart the moment he believes-and shall not come into condemnation, εἰς κρίσιν, into judgment-that which will speedily come on this unbelieving race; and that which shall overwhelm the wicked in the great day.

***But is passed from death unto life.***— μεταβέβηκεν, Has changed his country, or place of abode. Death is the country where every Christless soul lives. The man who knows not God lives a dying life, or a living death; but he who believes in the Son of God passes over from the empire of death, to the empire of life. Reader! thou wast born in death: hast thou yet changed the place of thy natural residence? Remember that to live in sin is to live in death; and those who live and die thus shall die eternally.

**Verse 25. *The dead shall hear the voice***— Three kinds of death are mentioned in the Scriptures: natural, spiritual, and eternal.

The first consists in the separation of the body and soul. The second in the separation of God and the soul. The third in the separation of body and soul from God in the other world. Answerable to these three kinds of death, there is a threefold life: Natural life, which consists in the union of the soul and body. Spiritual life, which consists in the union of God and the soul, by faith and love. Eternal life, which consist in the communion of the body and soul with God, by holiness, in the realms of bliss.

Of the dead, our Lord says, the hour is coming, and now is, when they shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live. The hour is coming, when all that sleep in the dust shall awake at the voice of the Son of man, and come to judgment: for he giveth life to the dead, John 5:21, 28, 29. Again, the hour is coming, when some of those who have died a natural death shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live again here. It is likely that our Lord had not as yet raised any from the dead; and he refers to those whom he intended to raise: see on John 5:21. Lastly, the hour now is, when many

who are dead in trespasses and sins, shall hear the voice (the word) of the Son of God, believe, and receive spiritual life through him.

**Verse 26. *Hath he given to the Son to have life***, etc.— Here our Lord speaks of himself in his character of Messiah, or envoy of God.

**Verse 27. *Because he is the Son of man***.— Because he is the Messiah; for in this sense the phrase, Son of man, is often to be understood. But some join this to the next verse thus:—Marvel not at this, because he is the Son of man.

**Verse 28. *Marvel not at this***— I think it quite necessary to follow here, as noted above, the punctuation of both the Syriac, the Armenian, Chrysostom, Damascenus, Theophylact, Euthymius, and others; which is found also in some very good MSS. Theophylact says that the common method of reading this, which he highly objects to, was the invention of Paul of Samosata. In John 5:26, 27, our Lord, speaking of himself as envoy of God, said, the Father had given him to have life in himself, so that, like any of the ancient prophets, he could vivify others; and that he had given him authority to execute judgment, probably referring to that judgment which he was shortly to execute on this unbelieving nation, and apparently in direct reference to Daniel 7:13, Behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds, etc., a place which the Jews expound of the promised Messiah. In this verse he anticipates an objection, as if they had said: “This cannot be: thou art a man—thou wast born among us.” Our Lord answers: Don’t marvel at this, BECAUSE I am a man—for greater things than these shall be done by me: he who now addresses you, though disguised under the form of a man, shall appear in the great day to be the Judge of quick and dead: by his almighty power, he shall raise all the dead; and, by his unerring wisdom and justice, shall adjudge the wicked to hell, and the righteous to heaven. The first sense, however, of this passage, appears to some the most probable; though they both amount nearly to the same meaning.

**Verse 30. *I can of mine own self do nothing***— Because of my intimate union with God. See on John 5:19.

***I weep not mine own will***— I do not, I cannot attempt to do any thing without God. This, that is, the Son of man, the human nature which is the

temple of my Divinity, John 1:14, is perfectly subject to the Deity that dwells in it. In this respect our blessed Lord is the perfect pattern of all his followers. In every thing their wills should submit to the will of their heavenly Father. Nothing is more common than to hear people say, I will do it because I choose. He who has no better reason to give for his conduct than his own will shall in the end have the same reason to give for his eternal destruction. “I followed my own will, in opposition to the will of God, and now I am plunged in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.”

Reader, God hath sent thee also to do his will: his will is that thou shouldst abandon thy sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus. Hast thou yet done it?

**Verse 31. *If I bear witness***— If I had no proof to bring of my being the Messiah, and equal to God, common sense would direct you to reject my testimony; but the mighty power of God, by which I work my miracles, sufficiently attests that my pretensions are well founded.

Bishop Pearce gives a different turn to this verse, by translating it interrogatively, thus: “If I only bear witness of myself, is not my witness true? i.e. is it, on that account, not true? In John 8:14, he says, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true. And in John 8:18, he says, I am one that bear witness of myself.”

**Verse 32. *There is another***— God the Father, who, by his Spirit in your prophets, described my person, office, and miracles. You read these scriptures, and you cannot help seeing that they testify of me:-no person ever did answer the description there given, but myself; and I answer to that description in the fullest sense of the word. See John 5:39.

***And I know***— Instead of *οἶδα*, I know, *οἶδατε*, ye know, is the reading of the Codex Bezae, Armenian, and two of the Itala. Ye believe the Scriptures to be of God, and that he cannot lie; and yet ye will not believe in me, though these Scriptures have so clearly foretold and described me! It is not one of the least evils attending unbelief, that it acts not only in opposition to God, but it also acts inconsistently with itself. It receives the Scriptures in bulk, and acknowledges them to have come through Divine inspiration; and yet believes no part separately. With it the whole

is true, but no part is true! The very unreasonableness of this conduct shows the principle to have come from beneath, were there no other evidences against it.

**Verse 33. *Ye sent unto John***— I am not without human testimony of the most respectable kind:-Ye sent to John, and he bare witness. There are several circumstances in John's character which render his testimony unexceptionable. 1. He is consulted by the very enemies of Christ, as a very holy and extraordinary man. 2. He is perfectly free from all self-interest, having declined making the least advantage by his own reputation. 3. He is sincere, undaunted, and so averse from all kinds of flattery that he reproves Herod at the hazard of his liberty and life. 4. He was so far from being solicited by Christ to give his testimony that he had not even seen him when he gave it. See John 1:19-28.

**Verse 34. *But I receive not testimony from man* [only.]** I have no need of John's testimony: the works that I do bear sufficient testimony to me, John 5:36.

***But these things I say***, etc.— You believed John to be a prophet—a prophet cannot lie: he bore testimony that I am the Lamb of God, that beareth away the sin of the world, John 1:29; therefore, that ye may be saved by believing in me as such, I have appealed to John's testimony.

**Verse 35. *He was a burning and a shining light***— *ην ο λυχνος ο καιομενος και φαινων*, should be translated, He was a burning and a shining LAMP. He was not *το φως του κοσμου*, the light of the world, i.e. the sun; but he was *ο λυχνος*, a lamp, to give a clear and steady light till the sun should arise. It is supposed that John had been cast into prison about four months before this time. See the note on John 4:35. As his light continued no longer to shine, our Lord says he WAS.

The expression of lamp our Lord took from the ordinary custom of the Jews, who termed their eminent doctors the lamps of Israel. A lighted candle is a proper emblem of a minister of God; and, *Alteri serviens consumor*—"In serving others, I myself destroy:"—a proper motto. There are few who preach the Gospel faithfully that do not lose their lives by it. Burning may refer to the zeal with which John executed his message; and shining may refer to the clearness of the testimony which he bore

concerning Christ. Only to shine is but vanity; and to burn without shining will never edify the Church of God. Some shine, and some burn, but few both shine and burn; and many there are who are denominated pastors, who neither shine nor burn. He who wishes to save souls must both burn and shine: the clear light of the knowledge of the sacred records must fill his understanding; and the holy flame of loving zeal must occupy his heart. Zeal without knowledge is continually blundering; and knowledge without zeal makes no converts to Christ.

**For a season**— The time between his beginning to preach and his being cast into prison.

**To rejoice**— *αγαλλιασθηναι*, To jump for joy, as we would express it. They were exceedingly rejoiced to hear that the Messiah was come, because they expected him to deliver them out of the hands of the Romans; but when a spiritual deliverance, of infinitely greater moment was preached to them, they rejected both it and the light which made it manifest.

**Verse 36. *But I have greater witness***— However decisive the judgment of such a man as John may be, who was the lamp of Israel, a miracle of grace, filled with the spirit of Elijah, and more than any prophet, because he pointed out, not the Messiah who was to come, but the Messiah who was already come: nevertheless, I am not obliged to depend on his testimony alone; for I have a greater one, that of Him whom you acknowledge to be your God. And how do I prove that this God bears testimony to me? By my works: these miracles, which attest my mission, and prove by themselves that nothing less than unlimited power and boundless love could ever produce them. By my word only, I have perfectly and instantly healed a man who was diseased thirty and eight years. Ye see the miracle—the man is before you whole and sound. Why then do ye not believe in my mission, that ye may embrace my doctrine, and be saved?

**Verse 37. *The Father himself-hath borne witness***— That is, by his prophets.

***Ye have neither heard his voice***— I make these words, with Bp. Pearce, a parenthesis: the sense is—"Not that my Father ever appeared visibly or spake audibly to any of you; but he did it by the mouths of his prophets."

Lately, however, he had added to their testimony his own voice from heaven, on the day of Christ's baptism. See Matthew 3:17.

**Verse 38. *Ye have not his word abiding in you***— Though ye believe the Scriptures to be of God, yet ye do not let them take hold of your hearts-his word is in your mouth, but not in your mind. What a miserable lot! to read the Scriptures as the true sayings of God, and yet to get no salvation from them! Thy word, says David, (Psalm 119:11,) have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. This, these Jews had not done. Reader, hast thou?

**Verse 39. *Search the Scriptures***— *ερευνατε τας γραφας*. This should be translated, not in the imperative, but in the indicative mood-thus, Ye search the Scriptures diligently. That these words are commonly read in the imperative mood is sufficiently known; but this reading can never accord well with the following verse, nor can the force and energy of the words be perceived by this version.

The rabbins strongly recommend the study of the Scriptures. The Talmud, Tract. Shabbath, fol. 30, brings in God thus addressing David: "I am better pleased with one day in which thou sittest and studiest the law, than I shall be with a thousand sacrifices which thy son Solomon shall offer upon my altar."

Perhaps the Scriptures were never more diligently searched than at that very time: first, because they were in expectation of the immediate appearing of the Messiah; secondly, because they wished to find out allegories in them; (see Philo;) and, thirdly, because they found these scriptures to contain the promise of an eternal life. He, said they, who studies daily in the law, is worthy to have a portion in the world to come, Sohar. Genes. fol. 31. Hence we may infer: 1st. That the Jews had the knowledge of a future state before the coming of Christ; and 2ndly. That they got that knowledge from the Old Testament Scriptures.

The word *ερευνατε*, which might be translated, Ye search diligently, is very expressive. Homer, IL. xviii. l. 321, applies it to a lion deprived of his whelps, who "scours the plains, and traces the footsteps of the man." And in ODYSSEY. xix. l. 436, to dogs tracing their game by the scent of the foot.

In the Septuagint, the verb **ερευναω** answers to the Hebrew **חפש** chapash, to search by uncovering; to **חקר** chakar, to search minutely, to explore; to **חשף** chashaph, to strip, make bare; and to **משש** mashash, to feel, search by feeling. It is compounded of **ερω**, I seek, and **ευνη**, a bed; “and is,” says St. Chrysostom, “a metaphor taken from those who dig deep, and search for metals in the bowels of the earth. They look for the bed where the metal lies, and break every clod, and sift and examine the whole, in order to discover the ore.” Those who read the verse in the imperative mood consider it an exhortation to the diligent study of the Sacred Writings. Search; that is, shake and sift them, as the word also signifies: search narrowly, till the true force and meaning of every sentence, yea, of every word and syllable, nay, of every letter and yod therein, be known and understood. Confer place with place; the scope of one place with that of another; things going before with things coming after: compare word with word, letter with letter, and search the whole thoroughly. See Parkhurst, Mintert, and Leigh.

Leaving every translation of the present passage out of the question, this is the proper method of reading and examining the Scriptures, so as to become wise unto salvation through them.

**Verse 40. *And ye will not come to me***— Though ye thus search the Scriptures, in hopes of finding the Messiah and eternal life in them, yet ye will not come unto me, believe in me, and be my disciples, though so clearly pointed out by them, that ye may have that eternal life which can only come through me.

**Verse 41. *I receive not honor from men***.— I do not stand in need of you or your testimony. I act neither through self-interest nor vanity. Your salvation can add nothing to me, nor can your destruction injure me: I speak only through my love for your souls, that ye may be saved.

**Verse 42. *But I know you, that ye have not***, etc.— Don’t say that you oppose me through zeal for God’s honor, and love for his name, because I make myself equal to him: no, this is not the case. I know the dispositions of your souls; and I know ye have neither love for his name, nor zeal for his glory. Incurable ignorance, and malicious jealousy, actuate your hearts. Ye read the Scriptures, but ye do not enter into their meaning. Had



you been as diligent to find out the truth, as you have been to find out allegories, false glosses, and something to countenance you in your crimes, you would have known that the Messiah, who is equal with God, must be the Son of man also, and the inheritor of David's throne; and that the very works which I do are those which the prophets have foretold the Messiah should perform. See Daniel 7:13, 14; Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:1-5, 10; 35:4-6.

**Verse 43. *I am come in my Father's name***— With all his influence and authority. Among the rabbins, it was essential to a teacher's credit that he should be able to support his doctrine by the authority of some eminent persons who had gone before. Hence the form, Coming in the name of another.

***If another shall come in his own name***— Having no Divine influence, and no other authority than his own, him ye will receive. That this was notoriously the case may appear from Josephus, Antiq. b. xviii. c. 14; Acts 5:36, 37; Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. b. iv. c. 6. It is by the just judgment of God, that those who will not believe the truth of God shall be so given up as to believe the most absurd of lies. For an account of these false Christs, see the notes on Matthew 24:5.

**Verse 44. *How can ye believe, which receive honor***, etc.— The grand obstacle to the salvation of the scribes and Pharisees was their pride, vanity, and self-love. They lived on each other's praise. If they had acknowledged Christ as the only teacher, they must have given up the good opinion of the multitude; and they chose rather to lose their souls than to forfeit their reputation among men! This is the ruin of millions. They would be religious, if religion and worldly honor were connected; but as the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and their hearts and souls are wedded to the earth, they will not accept the salvation which is offered to them on these terms—Deny thyself: take up thy cross, and follow ME. It is no wonder that we never find persons making any progress in religion who mix with the world, and in any respect regulate their conduct by its anti-Christian customs, maxims, and fashions.

***From God only?***— Or, from the only God—*παρὰ τοῦ μονοῦ θεοῦ*. Two of the ancient Slavonic versions read, From the only begotten Son of God.

**Verse 45. *Do not think that I will accuse you***— You have accused me with a breach of the Sabbath, which accusation I have demonstrated to be false: I could, in return, accuse you, and substantiate the accusation, with the breach of the whole law; but this I need not do, for Moses, in whom ye trust, accuses you. You read his law, acknowledge you should obey it, and yet break it both in the letter and in the spirit. This law, therefore, accuses and condemns you. It was a maxim among the Jews that none could accuse them but Moses: the spirit of which seems to be, that only so pure and enlightened a legislator could find fault with such a noble and excellent people! For, notwithstanding their abominations, they supposed themselves the most excellent of mankind!

**Verse 46. *He wrote of me***.— For instance, in reciting the prophecy of Jacob, Genesis 49:10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until SHILOH come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. And in Deuteronomy 18:18: I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, etc. Confer this with Acts 3:22, and Acts 7:37. Besides, Moses pointed out the Messiah in a multitude of symbols and figures, which are found in the history of the patriarchs, the ceremonial laws, and especially in the whole sacrificial system. All these were well-defined, though shadowy representations of the birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Savior of the world. Add to this, Moses has given you certain marks to distinguish the false from the true prophet, Deuteronomy 13:1-3; 18:22, which, if you apply to me, you will find that I am not a false but a true prophet of the Most High God.

**Verse 47. *But if ye believe not his writings***, etc.— If you lay them not to heart—if you draw not those conclusions from them which their very letter, as well as their spirit, authorizes you to draw, how shall ye believe my words, against which ye have taken up the most ungrounded prejudice? It is no wonder that we find the Jews still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity: as they believe not Moses and the prophets, in reference to the Messiah, it is no marvel that they reject Christ and the apostles. Till they see and acknowledge, from the law and the prophets, that Christ must have come, they will never believe the Gospel. St. Paul says, 2 Corinthians 3:15, that even until this day, when Moses (i.e. the law) is read, the VEIL is upon their hearts:—so that they see not to the end of that which is

abolished: 2 Corinthians 3:13. Nor will this veil be taken away, till they turn from worldly gain and atheism (which appears to be their general system) to the Lord, 2 Corinthians 3:16; and then the light of the glory of God shall shine on them in the face (through the mediation and merits) of Jesus Christ.

It appears that this discourse of our Lord had effectually confounded these Jews, for they went away without replying—a manifest proof they had nothing to say.

1. IN all periods of their history, the Jews were both an incredulous and disobedient people: perhaps it was on this ground that God first chose them to be keepers of his testimonies; for had they not had the most incontrovertible proofs that God did speak, they would neither have credited nor preserved his oracles.

Their incredulity is, therefore, no mean proof of the Divine authority of the law and the prophets. The apostles, who were all Jews, partook deeply of the same spirit, as various places in the Gospel prove; and, had not they had the fullest evidence of the divinity of their Master, they would not have believed, much less have sealed the truth with their blood. Thus their incredulity is a strong proof of the authenticity of the Gospel.

2. When a man, through prejudice, bigotry, or malevolence, is determined to disbelieve, both evidence and demonstration are lost upon him: he is incapable of conviction, because he is determined not to yield. This was, this is, the case with the Jews—there are facts before their eyes sufficient to convince and confound them; but they have made a covenant with unbelief, and therefore they continue blind, ignorant, and wicked; obstinately closing their eyes against the light; and thus the wrath of God is coming upon them to the very uttermost. But shall not a rebellious and wicked Christian be judged worthy of more punishment? Certainly: for he professes to believe that truth which is able to make him wise unto salvation, by faith in Jesus Christ. Reader, it is an awful thing to trifle with the Gospel!—the God of it is pure, jealous, and holy. Come unto him and implore forgiveness of thy past sins, that thou mayest have eternal life.

## CHAPTER 6.

*Jesus passes the sea of Tiberias, and a great multitude follow him, 1-4. He feeds five thousand with five loaves, and two fishes, 5-13. They acknowledge him to be the prophet that should come into the world, 14. They purpose to force him to become their king; and he withdraws from the multitude, 15. The disciples take ship, and go towards Capernaum, and are overtaken with a storm, 16-18. Christ comes to them, walking upon the water, 19-21. The people take boats and follow him, 22-24. He reproves their fleshly motives, 25-27. They profess a desire to be instructed, 28. Christ preaches to them, and shows them that he is the bread of life, and that they who reject him are without excuse, 29-40. They are offended, and cavil, 41, 42. He asserts and illustrates his foregoing discourse, 43-51. They again cavil, and Christ gives farther explanations, 52-59. Several of the disciples are stumbled at his assertion, that unless they ate his flesh and drank his blood they could not have life, 60. He shows them that his words are to be spiritually understood, 61-65. Several of them withdraw from him, 66. He questions the twelve, whether they also were disposed to forsake him, and Peter answers for the whole, 67-69. Christ exposes the perfidy of Judas, 70, 71.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6.

**Verse 1.** *After these things*— This is a sort of indefinite expression, from which we can gather nothing relative to the time in which these things happened. It refers no doubt to transactions in the preceding year.

*Jesus went over the sea of Galilee*— Or, as some translate the words, by the side of the sea of Galilee. From Luke, Luke 9:10, we learn that this was a desert place in the vicinity of Bethsaida. The sea of Galilee, Genesaret, and Tiberias, are the same in the New Testament with the sea of Cinnereth in the Old. Tiberias was a city in Galilee, situated on the western side of the lake. See on John 6:22.

**Verse 2.** *They saw his miracles which he did*— John does not mention these miracles; but Matthew details them, Matthew 12:2-14:13. John

seems more intent on supplying the deficiencies of the other evangelists than in writing a connected history himself.

**Verse 3. *Went up into a mountain***— This mountain must have been in the desert of Bethsaida, in the territories of Philip, tetrarch of Galilee. Our Lord withdrew to this place for a little rest; for he and his disciples had been so thronged with the multitudes, continually coming and going, that they had not time to take necessary food. See Mark 6:31.

**Verse 4. *And the passover-was nigh***.— This happened about ten or twelve days before the third passover which Christ celebrated after his baptism. Calmet. For a particular account of our Lord's four passovers see the note on John 2:13.

For thirty days before the Passover there were great preparations made by the Jews, but especially in the last nineteen days, in order to celebrate the feast with due solemnity. Lightfoot supposes that what is here related happened within the last fifteen days. See Calmet's opinion above.

**Verse 5. *Saw a great company***— See this miracle explained at large on Matthew 14:13, etc.; Mark 6:31, etc.; Luke 9:10, etc.

In speaking of the passovers, and various other matters, it does not appear that John follows any strict chronological order.

From John 6:15, it appears that our Lord had come down from the mountain, and fed the multitudes in a plain at the foot of it.

***Saith unto Philip***— This, with what follows, to the end of {John 6:7} the seventh verse, is not mentioned by any of the other evangelists.

Philip was probably the provider for the disciples, as Judas was the treasurer.

***Whence shall we buy bread***— Instead of *αγορασομεν*, shall we buy, I should read *αγορασωμεν*, may we buy, which is the reading of ABDEHLS, Mt. VB, and many others. As Philip was of Bethsaida, John 1:44; 12:21, he must have been much better acquainted with the country in which they then were than any other of the disciples.

**Verse 6. *This he said to prove him***— To try his faith, and to see whether he and the other apostles had paid proper attention to the miracles which

they had already seen him work; and to draw their attention more particularly to that which he was now about to perform. This is an observation of the evangelist himself, who often interweaves his own judgment with the facts he relates, which St. Matthew rarely ever does. The other evangelists say that, previously to this miracle, he continued to instruct and heal the multitudes till it was near the close of the day. Matthew 14:14, 15; Mark 6:34, 35; Luke 9:11, 12.

**Verse 7. *Two hundred pennyworth***— This sum, rating the denarius at 7 3/4d., would amount to 6ú. 9s. 2d. of our money, and appears to have been more than our Lord and all his disciples were worth of this world's goods. See the notes on Matthew 18:28.

**Verse 8. *Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith***— The other evangelists attribute this answer to the apostles in general. See the passages referred to above.

**Verse 9. *There is a lad here***— *παῖδαριον*, a little boy, or servant, probably one who carried the apostles' provisions, or who came on purpose to sell his bread and fish.

***Five barley loaves***— Barley scarcely bore one-third of the value of wheat in the east: see Revelation 6:6. That it was a very mean fare appears from Ezekiel 13:19, where the false prophetesses are said to pollute the name of God for handfuls of barley, i.e. for the meanest reward. And Plutarch, in Apoph. p. 174, speaking concerning the flight of Artaxerxes Mnemon, says he was reduced to such distress as to be obliged to eat barley bread. See Kypke. From this and other circumstances we may plainly perceive that the self-denying doctrine preached by Christ and his apostles was fully exemplified in their own manner of living.

***Two small fishes***— *δυο οψαρια*. The word of *οψαριον* signifies whatever is eaten with bread, to perfect the meal, or to make it easy of deglutition, or to help the digestion. There is no word in the English language for it, which is a great defect. The inhabitants of Scotland, and of the north and north-west of Ireland, use the word kytshen, by which they express what ever is eaten with bread or potatoes, as flesh, fish, butter, milk, eggs, etc., no satisfactory etymology of which word I am able to offer. In the parallel places in the other three evangelists, instead of

οψαρια, ιχθυας is used; so that the word evidently means fish in the text of St. John: see on John 21:5.

**Verse 10. *There was much grass in the place.***— Perhaps newly mown grass, or hay, is meant, (so the Vulgate faenum,) and this circumstance marks out more particularly that the passover was at hand. In Palestine the grass is ready for mowing in March; and this miracle seems to have been wrought only a few days before the commencement of that festival: see John 6:4.

**Verse 11. *Jesus took the loaves***— See the notes on Matthew 14:19-21. As there were five loaves and five thousand people, so there was one loaf to every thousand men, independently of the women and children.

**Verse 12. *Gather up the fragments***— “Great will be the punishment of those who waste the crumbs of food, scatter seed, and neglect the law.” Synops Sohar. Among the Jews the פסע peah, or residue after a meal, was the property of the servitors.

**Verse 14. *This is of a truth that prophet***— Spoken of, Deuteronomy 18:15, viz. the Messiah. How near were these people at this time to the kingdom of heaven!

**Verse 15. *Take him by force, to make him a king***— The Jews had often suffered by famine in those times in which their enemies were permitted to prevail over them; but, finding that Jesus had such power as to multiply a few loaves to feed thousands, they took it for granted that while he was at their head no evil could possibly happen to them, and therefore were determined immediately to proclaim him king, and rid themselves at once of Herod and the Romans. Our Lord perceiving this, either by some words which they had dropped, or by his penetration of their hearts, retired before the project had been fully formed, or could be put into execution. It was not till a considerable time afterwards that even the disciples fully understood that his kingdom was not of this world.

***Into a mountain***— That on which he was with his disciples previously to his working this miracle: see John 6:3.

St. Matthew, Matthew 14:22, 23, and Mark, Mark 6:45, 46, say that, before this, Jesus constrained his disciples to embark in the vessel, and go

along the sea coast towards Capernaum, or Bethsaida—see here John 6:17, and the note on Mark 6:45; and that, after they were gone, he dismissed the multitudes, having, no doubt, given them such advices as the nature of the case required; after which he went into the mountain to pray.

Worldly wisdom would have said, “Declare thyself king: yield to the desires of the people: this will be the readiest way of converting the Jews.” No. Jesus must die for the sin of the world.—No man’s heart can be turned to God by outward pomp or splendor—no saving change can be brought about by any might or any power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. Zechariah 4:6.

**Verse 17. *Toward Capernaum.***— St. Mark says, Mark 6:45, that our Lord commanded them to go along to Bethsaida; and in the course of the history we find they got neither to Bethsaida nor Capernaum, but landed in the country of Genesaret: Matthew 14:34. Our Lord seems to have desired them to go either to Bethsaida or Capernaum, which were only a very few miles distant, and on the same side of the sea. The reason why they could reach neither was the storm which the evangelists say rose at the time, and the wind being contrary: the storm being probably excited by the prince of the power of the air. Capernaum lay at the northern part of this sea, and they went along the Galilean or western coast, probably expecting Christ to come to them, on which account they might keep in close by the land. But there are great difficulties in fixing the places mentioned by the evangelists. By some writers Bethsaida and Capernaum are placed on opposite sides of this lake: by others on the same side. Sometimes when our translation speaks of passing over the sea, etc., a coasting voyage only is meant, as we find the disciples landing on the same side from which they had departed: see the note on John 6:22.

**Verse 19. *Had rowed***— Their vessel was a small one only, something of the boat kind: as to sails, if they had any, they could not now venture to carry them, because of the storm.

***Five and twenty or thirty furlongs***— Between three and four miles. The sea of Tiberias, on which they now were, was, according to Josephus, War, book iii. chap. 25, forty furlongs, or five miles in breadth; and one hundred and forty furlongs, or eighteen miles, in length. Pliny, lib. v. chap. 15, makes it about six miles broad, and sixteen long.



**They see Jesus**— See the notes on Matthew 14:25, etc.

**Verse 21. *Immediately the ship was at the land***— How far they were from the place at which they landed, when our Lord came to them, we know not. But the evangelist seems to speak of their sudden arrival there as extraordinary and miraculous.

**Verse 22. *The people which stood on the other side***— ἑστηκως περαν της θαλασσης, Standing by the sea side. The people were not on the other side, i.e. in Perea, as our version states, but on that side where Bethsaida lay: see the notes on Matthew 14:25, 34, and on Mark 6:45. The Greek word, περαν, says Bishop Pearce, seems to signify in Scripture sometimes on the side of, and sometimes on this side of: see Joshua 5:1. and 1 Macc. 9:34. The Hebrew word אַבָר abar, signifies by the side: Exodus 28:26, and is translated on this side in Deuteronomy 4:29. It has the same meaning in the Septuagint, Deuteronomy 1:5; 3:8; 4:46. περαν, says Vorstius, is the same with παρα, near to. This is evidently the meaning of the word in Matthew 4:15; as it appears, from what is said of the land of Zabulon and Nephthali, that by περαν is not meant beyond, but by the side of; because those two tribes inhabited the western side of Jordan, which was the side lying nearest to Judea and Galilee: see on Matthew 19:1.

**Verse 23. *There came other boats***— After Jesus and his disciples had departed.

**From Tiberias**— Herod Antipas built this city near the lake of Genesaret, in the best parts of Galilee, and called it Tiberias, in honor of Tiberius, the Roman emperor: see Jos. Ant. book xviii. chap. 2. sect. 3.

**Verse 24. *They also took shipping***— That is, as many of them as could get accommodated with boats took them and thus got to Capernaum; but many others doubtless went thither on foot, as it is not at all likely that five or six thousand persons could get boats enow to carry them.

**Verse 25. *On the other side of the sea***— That is, on the sea coast, to the northward of it, where Capernaum lies in the land of Genesaret: but see the note, on John 6:17, 22. It was in one of the synagogues of Capernaum that he delivered the following discourse: see John 6:59.

**Verse 26. *Ye seek me, not because ye saw***, etc.— Though the miracle of the loaves was one of the most astonishing that ever was wrought upon earth; and though this people had, by the testimony of all their senses, the most convincing proof of its reality; yet we find many of them paid little attention to it, and regarded the omnipotent hand of God in it no farther than it went to satisfy the demands of their appetite! Most men are willing to receive temporal good from the hands of God; but there are few, very few, who are willing to receive spiritual blessings.

**Verse 27. *Labor not for the meat***— That is, for that only, but also for the bread, etc. Our Lord wills every man to be active and diligent in that employment in which providence has placed him; but it is his will also that that employment, and all the concerns of life, should be subservient to the interest of his soul.

***But for that meat***, etc.— He who labors not, in the work of his salvation, is never likely to enter into the kingdom of God. Though our labor cannot purchase it, either in whole or in part, yet it is the way in which God chooses to give salvation; and he that will have heaven must strive for it. Every thing that can be possessed, except the salvation of God, is a perishing thing: this is its essential character: it can last to us no longer than the body lasts. But, when the earth and its produce are burnt up, this bread of Christ, his grace and salvation, will be found remaining unto eternal life. This is the portion after which an immortal spirit should seek.

***Him hath God the Father sealed***.— By this expression, our Lord points out the commission which, as the Messiah, he received from the Father, to be prophet and priest to an ignorant, sinful world. As a person who wishes to communicate his mind to another who is at a distance writes a letter, seals it with his own seal, and sends it directed to the person for whom it was written, so Christ, who lay in the bosom of the Father, came to interpret the Divine will to man, bearing the image, superscription, and seal of God, in the immaculate holiness of his nature, unsullied truth of his doctrine, and in the astonishing evidence of his miracles. But he came also as a priest, to make an atonement for sin; and the bread which nourishes unto eternal life, he tells us, John 6:51, is his body, which he gives for the life of the world; and to this sacrifice of himself, the words, him hath God the Father sealed, seem especially to relate. It certainly was a custom,

among nations contiguous to Judea, to set a seal upon the victim which was deemed proper for sacrifice. The following account of the method of providing white bulls among the Egyptians, for sacrifices to their god Apis, taken from HERODOTUS, Euterpe, b. ii. p. 117, casts much light upon this place. "They sacrifice white bulls to Apis; and for that reason make the following trial. If they find one black hair upon him, they consider him as unclean: that they may know this with certainty, the priest appointed for this purpose views every part of the animal, both standing and lying on the ground. After this, he draws out his tongue, to see if he be clean by certain signs: in the last place, he looks upon the hairs of his tail, that he may be sure they are as by nature they should be. If, after this search, the bull is found unblemished, he signifies it by tying a label to his horns; then, having applied wax, he seals it with his ring, and they lead him away: for it is death to sacrifice one of these animals, unless he have been marked with such a seal.

The Jews could not be unacquainted with the rites and ceremonies of the Egyptian worship; and it is possible that such precautions as these were in use among themselves, especially as they were so strictly enjoined to have their sacrifices without SPOT, and without blemish. Infinite justice found Jesus Christ to be without spot or blemish, and therefore sealed, pointed out and accepted him, as a proper sacrifice and atonement for the sin of the whole world. Collate with this passage, Hebrews 7:26-28; Ephesians 5:27; 2 Peter 3:14; and especially Hebrews 9:13, 14: For if the blood of BULLS and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth-how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself WITHOUT SPOT to God, purge your consciences from dead works! The rabbins talk much of the seal of God, which they suppose to be אמת emeth, or truth; and that this is a representation of the unoriginated and endless perfections of God. This doctrine is just; but their method of proving it is not so satisfactory. Aleph א, say they, is the first letter of the alphabet; mem מ the middle; and tau ט the last: these three letters make אמת emeth, TRUTH, because God is the first-there was none before him; he is the middle-none mingles with him; and he is the last-there can be none after him. Hieros. Sanhed. fol. 18. See also 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

**Verse 28. *That we might work the works of God?***— That is, Divine works, or such as God can approve.

**Verse 29. *This is the work of God, that ye believe***— There is nothing you can be employed in more acceptable to God than in yielding to the evidence set before you, and acknowledging me as your Messiah and the Savior of a lost world.

**Verse 30. *What sign***— **τι σημειον**, What miracle; so the word is evidently used, John 2:11, 23, and in many other places.

***That we may see, and believe thee***— That, having seen the miracle, we may believe thee to be the promised Messiah. They had already seen the miracle of the five loaves, and did not believe; and it was impossible for them to see any thing more descriptive of unlimited power and goodness. Even miracles themselves are lost on persons whose hearts are fixed on the perishing things of the world, and whose minds are filled with prejudice against the truth.

**Verse 31. *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert***— Their argument seems to run thus: Thou hast, we grant, fed five thousand men with five loaves and two small fishes; but what is this in comparison of what Moses did in the desert, who for forty years fed more than a million of persons with bread from heaven: do something like this, and then we will believe in thee, as we have believed in Moses.

**Verse 32. *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven***— Our Lord refutes the argument of the Jews, by proving: 1. That it was not Moses, but God, who gave the manna. 2. That this bread was not the true bread, but was merely a type of it. 3. That God had given them now a bread infinitely more excellent. 4. That himself is that heavenly nourishment of which he spake, and who was typified by the manna in the desert.

To show that himself was the true bread from heaven, he proves two things: 1. That his doctrine was the true nourishment of the soul, and that those who were to be put in possession of the blessings promised in it must come to God by faith. 2. That he would give his body for the life of the world: that as bread is the staff that supports the natural life of man, so the salvation procured by his death should be that by which the bodies and souls of believers should be preserved unto life eternal.

**Verse 34. *Lord, evermore give us this bread.***— Either meaning, “Let the miracle of the manna be renewed, and continue among us for ever:” or, “Let that bread of which thou hast spoken, become our constant nourishment.” The Jews expected that, when the Messiah should come, he would give them all manner of delicacies, and, among the rest, manna, wine, and spicy oil. From the following extract, we may see where Mohammed got his Paradise. “Many affirm, says Rab. Mayemon, that the hope of Israel is this: That the Messiah shall come and raise the dead; and they shall be gathered together in the garden of Eden, and shall eat and drink and satiate themselves all the days of the world. There the houses shall be all builded with precious stones; the beds shall be made of silk; and the rivers shall flow with wine and spicy oil. He made manna to descend for them, in which was all manner of tastes; and every Israelite found in it what his palate was chiefly pleased with. If he desired fat in it, he had it. In it, the young man tasted bread, the old man honey, and the children oil. So shall it be in the world to come, (i.e. the days of the Messiah.) He shall give Israel peace, and they shall sit down in the garden of Eden, and all nations shall behold their condition; as it is said, My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry, etc., Isaiah 65:13.” See Lightfoot.

**Verse 35. *I am the bread of life***— That is, the bread which gives life, and preserves from death.

***He that cometh to me***— The person who receives my doctrine, and believes in me as the great atoning sacrifice, shall be perfectly satisfied, and never more feel misery of mind. All the guilt of his sins shall be blotted out, and his soul shall be purified unto God; and, being enabled to love him with all his heart, he shall rest, fully, supremely, and finally happy, in his God.

**Verse 37. *All that the Father giveth me***— The neuter gender,  $\pi\alpha\nu$ , is probably used here for the masculine,  $\pi\alpha\varsigma$ .

***Shall come to me***— All that are drawn by the Father, John 6:44, i.e. all those who are influenced by his Spirit, and yield to those influences: for as many as are LED (not driven or dragged) by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God, Romans 8:14. God sent his prophets to proclaim his salvation to this people; and he accompanied their preaching with the influence of his Spirit. Those who yielded were saved: those who did not

yield to these drawings were lost. This Spirit still continued to work and to allure; but the people being uncircumcised both in heart and ears, they always resisted the Holy Ghost; as their fathers did, so did they; Acts 7:51. And though Christ would have gathered them together, as a hen would her chickens under her wings, yet they would not. See the note on Matthew 23:37. Those who come at the call of God, he is represented here as giving to Christ, because it is through his blood alone that they can be saved. God, by his Spirit, convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; those who acknowledge their iniquity, and their need of salvation, he gives to Christ, i.e. points out unto them the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Our Lord may here also refer to the calling of the Gentiles; for these, according to the ancient promise, Psalm 2:8, were given to Christ: and they, on the preaching of the Gospel, gladly came unto him. See ample proofs of this in the Acts of the Apostles.

***I will in no wise cast out.***— The words are exceedingly emphatical—**οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἐξω**, I will by no means thrust out of doors; excellently rendered by Matthew of Erberg in his Italian Bible—*Io non cacciaro fuori*, I will not chase him out of the house. Our blessed Lord alludes to the case of a person in deep distress and poverty, who comes to a nobleman's house, in order to get relief: the person appears; and the owner, far from treating the poor man with asperity, welcomes, receives him kindly, and supplies his wants. So does Jesus. Newer did he reject the suit of a penitent, however grievous his crimes might have been. He is come to the house of mercy; he is lying at the threshold: the servants bid him come in—he obeys, and stands trembling, waiting for the appearing of the Master, doubtful whether he is to be received or rejected: the Master appears, and not only grants his suit, but receives him into the number of his family: he alleges his unfitness, his unworthiness, his guilt, his crimes, his ingratitude: no matter, all shall be blotted out through the blood of the Lamb, and he be put among the children, and on none of these accounts shall he be put out of the house. The Gentiles shall be as welcome as the Jews; and the invitation to them be as free, as full, and as hearty: they shall become his adopted children, and never be cast out, as the Jews have been. O thou God of love! how able and WILLING art thou to save the vilest of the vile, who come unto thee! Thou art not the God of the Jews only, thou art also the God of the Gentiles. Rejoice, therefore, ye Gentiles, with his people.

**Verse 38. *Not to do mine own will***— I am come, not to act according to human motives, passions, or prejudices; but according to infinite wisdom, goodness, and mercy. Jewish passions and prejudices would reject publicans and sinners as those alluded to, and shut the gate of heaven against the Gentiles; but God's mercy receives them, and I am come to manifest that mercy to men.

**Verse 39. *I should lose nothing***— It is the will of God that every soul who believes should continue in the faith, and have a resurrection unto life eternal. But he wills this continuance in salvation, without purposing to force the persons so to continue. God may will a thing to be, without willing that it shall be. Judas was given to Christ by the Father, John 17:12. The Father willed that this Judas should continue in the faith, and have a resurrection unto life eternal: but Judas sinned and perished. Now it is evident that God willed that Judas might be saved, without willing that he must be saved infallibly and unconditionally. When a man is a worker together with the grace of God, he is saved; when he receives that grace of God in vain, he is lost—not through a lack of will or mercy in God, but through lack of his co-operation with Divine grace. God saves no man as a stock or a stone, but as a reasonable being and free agent. “That which thou hast heard, thou mayest hold fast, and persevere in, if thou wilt,” Says St. Augustin. In eo quod audieras, et teneras, perseverares, si velles. Deuteronomy Correct. & Grat. c. 7. See Calmet.

***Raise it up again at the last day***— The Jews believed that the wicked should have no resurrection; and that the principle that led to the resurrection of the body, in the righteous, was the indwelling Spirit of God. This is positively asserted in the Shir Hashirim Rabba. See Schoettgen.

**Verse 40. *This is the will of him that sent me***— Lest they should take a wrong meaning out of his words, as many have done since, he tells them that, far from any person being excluded from his mercy, it was the will of God that every one who saw him might believe and be saved. The power, without which they could not believe, he freely gave them; but the use of that power was their own. God gives the grace of repentance and faith to every man; but he neither repents nor believes for any man. Each must

repent for his own sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus, through the grace given, or perish.

**Verse 41. *The Jews then murmured***— Because the whole of his discourse event to prove that he was infinitely greater than Moses; and that he alone could give present peace and eternal glory to men.

**Verse 44. *Except the Father-draw him***— But how is a man drawn? St. Augustin answers from the poet, *Trahit sua quemque voluptas*; a man is attracted by that which he delights in. Show green herbage to a sheep, he is drawn by it: show nuts to a child, and he is drawn by them. They run wherever the person runs who shows these things: they run after him, but they are not forced to follow; they run, through the desire they feel to get the things they delight in. So God draws man: he shows him his wants—he shows the Savior whom he has provided for him: the man feels himself a lost sinner; and, through the desire which he finds to escape hell, and get to heaven, he comes unto Christ, that he may be justified by his blood. Unless God thus draw, no man will ever come to Christ; because none could, without this drawing, ever feel the need of a Savior. See August. Tract. 26, in Joan. and Calmet.

Drawing, or alluring, not dragging is here to be understood. “He,” say the rabbins, “who desires to cleave to the holy and blessed God, God lays hold of him, and will not cast him off.” Synops. Sohar. p. 87. The best Greek writers use the verb in the same sense of alluring, inciting, etc.

**Verse 45. *It is written in the prophets***— Isaiah 54:13; Jeremiah 31:34.

***They shall be all taught of God.***— This explains the preceding verse. God teaches a man to know himself, that, finding his need of salvation, he may flee to lay hold on the hope which his heavenly Father has set before him in the Gospel. God draws men by his love, and by showing them what his love has done for them. Fear repels, but love attracts. He who is ever preaching the terrors of the law, and representing God as a vindictive judge, will never bring sinners to him. They are afraid of this terrible God: but they love him, who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.



**Verse 46. *Not that any man hath seen the Father***— He does not teach men by appearing personally before them, or by any other outward voice than that of his word and messengers; but he teaches by his Spirit. This teaching from God implies: 1. That they shall have proper instruction. 2. That they shall comprehend it; for, when God teaches, there is no delay in learning. And, 3. That this teaching should be by the influence of the Holy Ghost upon their minds.

***He which is of God***— That is, Christ alone: neither Moses nor any of the prophets had ever seen God: Jesus, who lay in the bosom of the Father, HE saw and revealed him, John 1:18.

**Verse 47. *Hath everlasting life***.— He is entitled to this, on his believing me to be the Messiah, and trusting in me alone for salvation. Our blessed Lord recapitulates here what he had said in the preceding discourse. The person who is saved is, 1. drawn by the Father; 2. hears his instructions; 3. accepts the salvation offered; 4. is given to Christ Jesus, that he may be justified by faith; 5. is nourished by the bread of life; 6. perseveres in the faith; 7. is not lost, but is raised up at the last day; and 8. is made a partaker of eternal life.

**Verse 48. *I am that bread of life***.— I alone afford, by my doctrine and Spirit, that nourishment by which the soul is saved unto life eternal.

**Verse 49. *Your fathers did eat manna-and are dead***.— That bread neither preserved their bodies alive, nor entitled them to life eternal; but those who receive my salvation, shall not only be raised again in the last day, but shall inherit eternal life. It was an opinion of the Jews themselves that their fathers, who perished in the wilderness, should never have a resurrection. Our Lord takes them on their own ground: Ye acknowledge that your fathers who fell in the wilderness shall never have a resurrection; and yet they ate of the manna: therefore that manna is not the bread that preserves to everlasting life, according even to your own concession.

**Verse 50. *This is the bread***, etc.— I am come for this very purpose, that men may believe in me, and have eternal life.

**Verse 51. *Is my flesh, which I will give***, etc.— Our Lord explains his meaning more fully, in these words, than he had done before. Having spoken so much of the bread which feeds and nourishes the soul, and

preserves from death, the attention of his hearers was fixed upon his words, which to them appeared inexplicable; and they desired to know what their meaning was. He then told them that the bread meant his flesh, (his life,) which he was about to give up; to save the life of the world. Here our Lord plainly declares that his death was to be a vicarious sacrifice and atonement for the sin of the world; and that, as no human life could be preserved unless there was bread (proper nourishment) received, so no soul could be saved but by the merit of his death. Reader, remember this: it is one of the weightiest, and one of the truest and most important sayings in the book of God.

**Verse 52.** *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*— Our Lord removes this difficulty, and answers the question, in John 6:63.

**Verse 53.** *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man*— Unless ye be made partakers of the blessings about to be purchased by my blood, passion, and violent death, ye cannot be saved. As a man must eat bread and flesh, in order to be nourished by them, so a man must receive the grace and Spirit of Christ, in order to his salvation. As food in a rich man's store does not nourish the poor man that needs it, unless it be given him, and he receive it into his stomach, so the whole fountain of mercy existing in the bosom of God, and uncommunicated, does not save a soul: he who is saved by it must be made a partaker of it. Our Lord's meaning appears to be, that, unless they were made partakers of the grace of that atonement which he was about to make by his death, they could not possibly be saved. Bishop Pearce justly observes that the ideas of eating and drinking are here borrowed to express partaking of, and sharing in. Thus spiritual happiness on earth, and even in heaven, is expressed by eating and drinking; instances of which may be seen, Matthew 8:11; 26:29; Luke 14:15; 22:30; and Revelation 2:17. Those who were made partakers of the Holy Spirit are said by St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 12:13, to be made to drink into (or of) one Spirit. This, indeed, was a very common mode of expression among the Jews.

**Verse 54.** *Hath eternal life*— This can never be understood of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. 1. Because this was not instituted till a year after; at the last Passover. 2. It cannot be said that those who do not receive that sacrament must perish everlastingly. Nor can it be supposed

that all those who do receive it are necessarily and eternally saved. On the contrary, St. Paul intimates that many who received it at Corinth perished, because they received it unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body: not distinguishing between it and a common meal; and not properly considering that sacrifice for sin, of which the sacrament of the Lord's supper was a type: see 1 Corinthians 11:30.

**Verse 55. *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.***— Or, rather, My flesh is the true meat, etc. In both clauses of this verse, instead of *αληθως*, the adverb, I read *αληθης*, the adjective, agreeing with *βρωσις*. This reading is supported by BCKLT, and twenty-one others; both the Arabic, Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, two copies of the Itala, Clement, Origen, Cyril, Chrysostom, and Damascenus. Our Lord terms his flesh, the true meat, and his blood the true drink, because those who received the grace merited by his death would be really nourished and supported thereby unto eternal life. He calls himself the true vine, John 15:1, in exactly the same sense in which he calls himself the true bread, John 6:32, and the true meat and drink in this verse.

**Verse 56. *Dwelleth in me, and I in him.***— Of all connections and unions, none is so intimate and complete as that which is effected by the digestion of aliments, because they are changed into the very substance of him who eats them; and this our Lord makes the model of that union which subsists between himself and genuine believers. He lives in them, and they in him; for they are made partakers of the Divine nature: 2 Peter 1:4. To this verse the following addition is made in the Codex Bezae, three copies of the Itala, and Victorinus. After these words—dwelleth in me, and I in him, they add, as the Father in me, and I in the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that unless ye receive the body of the Son of man as the bread of life, ye have not life in him. This is a very remarkable addition, and is between thirteen and fourteen hundred years old.

**Verse 57. *So he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.***— From which we learn that the union between Christ and his followers shall be similar to that which subsists between God and Christ.

**Verse 59. *In the synagogue-in Capernaum.***— From John 6:26, to this verse, the evangelist gives us the discourse which our Lord preached in the synagogue, in which he was repeatedly interrupted by the Jews; but this

gave him the fuller opportunity to proclaim the whole truth relative to his passion and death, to edify the disciples, and confute these gainsayers.

**Verse 60. *Many therefore of his disciples***— So it appears that he had many more than the twelve, who constantly accompanied him.

***This is a hard saying; who can hear it?***— Who can digest such doctrine as this? It is intolerable: it is impracticable. There is a similar saying in Euripides, to the *σκληρος λογος* of the evangelist. *ποτερα θελεις σοι μαλθακα ψευδη λεγω, η σκληρ' αληθη, φραζε;* Tell me whether thou wouldst that I should speak unto thee, a SOFT LIE, or the HARSH TRUTH? The wicked word of a lying world is in general better received than the holy word of the God of truth!

**Verse 61. *Jesus knew in himself***— By giving them this proof that he knew their hearts he also proved that he was God; that he could not be deceived himself, and that it was impossible for him to deceive any; consequently, that the doctrine he taught them must be the truth of God.

**Verse 62. *If ye shall see the Son of man ascend***— Ye need not be stumbled at what I say concerning eating my flesh and drinking my blood, for ye shall soon have the fullest proof that this is figuratively spoken, for I shall ascend with the same body with which I shall arise from the dead; therefore my flesh and blood, far from being eaten by men, shall not even be found among them.

**Verse 63. *It is the spirit that quickeneth***— It is the spiritual sense only of my words that is to be attended to, and through which life is to be attained, 2 Corinthians 3:6. Such only as eat and drink what I have mentioned, in a spiritual sense, are to expect eternal life.

***The flesh profiteth nothing***— If ye could even eat my flesh and drink my blood, this would not avail for your salvation. These words contain a caution that the hearers should not understand his words in the strict literal sense, as if his body were really BREAD, and as if his flesh and blood were really to be eaten and drank.

The words that I speak Or, I have spoken. Instead of *λαλω*, I speak, I read *λελαληκα*, I have spoken, on the authority of BCDKLT, thirteen others; the Syriac, all the Arabic, all the Persic, Coptic, Aethiopic, Gothic,

Slavonic, Vulgate, all the Itala; Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Basil, Cyril, Chrysostom, Tertullian, Ambrosias, Augustin, Gaudentius, and Vigilius Taps. This is an important reading, and plainly shows that our Lord's words here do not refer to any new point of doctrine which he was then inculcating, but to what he had spoken concerning his being the living bread, and concerning the eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, in the preceding verses.

*Are spirit, and they are life.*— As my words are to be spiritually understood, so the life they promise is of a spiritual nature: see Bishop Pearce.

**Verse 64.** *But there are some of you that believe not.*— This is addressed to Judas, and to those disciples who left him: John 6:66.

*And who should betray him*— Or, who would deliver him up. Because he knew all things; he knew from the first, from Judas's call to the apostleship, and from eternity, (if the reader pleases,) who it was who would (not should) deliver him up into the hands of the Jews. Should, in the apprehension of most, implies necessity and compulsion; would implies that he was under the influence of his own free will, without necessity or constraint. The former takes away his guilt: for what a man is irresistibly compelled to do, by the supreme authority of God, he cannot avoid; and therefore to him no blame can attach: but Judas having acted through his own free will, abusing his power, and the grace he had received, he was guilty of the murder of an innocent man, and deserved the perdition to which he went.

**Verse 65.** *Therefore said I unto you*— John 6:44. see the note there.

*Except it were given unto him*— None can come at first, unless he be drawn by the Father; and none can continue, unless he continue under those sacred influences which God gives only to those who do not receive his first graces in vain. St. Augustin himself grants that it was the sole fault of these disciples that they did not believe, and were saved. Quare non POTERANT credere, si a me quaeratur, cito respondeo, quia NOLEBANT. If I be asked why these could not believe, I immediately answer, because they WOULD NOT. Aug. Tract. 53, in Joan.

**Verse 66. *Many of his disciples went back***— They no longer associated with him, nor professed to acknowledge him as the Messiah. None of these were of the twelve. Christ had many others who generally attended his ministry, and acknowledged him for the Messiah.

**Verse 67. *Will ye also go away?***— Or, Do YE also desire, etc. These words are very emphatical. Will YOU abandon me?-you, whom I have distinguished with innumerable marks of my affection-you, whom I have chosen out of the world to be my companions,-you, to whom I have revealed the secrets of the eternal world-you, who have been witnesses of all my miracles-you, whom I intend to seat with me on my throne in glory; will YOU go away? Reader, in what state art thou? Hast thou gone back from Christ, or art thou going back? Wilt thou go? Thou, whom he has redeemed by his blood-thou, whom he has upheld by his power, and fed by his providence-thou, into whose wounded soul he has poured the balm of pardoning mercy-thou, whom he has adopted into the heavenly family-thou, whom he has comforted in so many tribulations and adversities-thou, whose multiplied offenses he has freely and fully pardoned; wilt thou go away?

**Verse 68. *Simon Peter answered***— With his usual zeal and readiness, speaking in behalf of the whole, To whom shall we go? Where shall we find a more gracious master-a more powerful Redeemer-a more suitable Savior? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life. None can teach the doctrine of salvation but thyself; and none can confer the gift of eternal life but thou alone. Reader, let me ask, whither art thou going? Has the world-the devil-the flesh-the words of eternal life? Art thou turning thy back upon God and Christ? For thy zealous services, what has Satan to give thee? Death! hell! and eternal misery! O stop! Cleave to Jesus; he will give thee that happiness which, in vain, thou seekest in the pleasures of sin.

**Verse 69. *We believe***— On the authority of thy word; and are sure-have known, *εγνωκαμεν*, by the evidence of thy miracles, that thou art the Christ, the promised Messiah. (Anglo-Saxon) And we belyfath and witen that thu eart Crist Godes Son. Anglo-Saxon. How near is the mother to the daughter tongue!

Instead of Christ the Son of the living God, some excellent MSS., BCDL, and others, read **ο αγιος του θεου**, the holy one of God; and this reading Griesbach has received into the text, leaving out **του ζωντος**, the living. **χριστος**, and **αγιος** convey nearly the same meaning; but the Aethiopic, as usual, retains both. **του ζωντες** is omitted by BCDL, H, the Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, later Persic, Vulgate, all the Itala but one, and by the Anglo-Saxon; which last Griesbach has not noticed.

**Verse 70. *Have not I chosen you twelve***— Have I not, in an especial manner, called you to believe in my name, and chosen you to be my disciples and the propagators of my doctrine! Nevertheless, one of you is a devil, or accuser, enlisted on the side of Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning.

**Verse 71. *He spake of Judas-for he it was that should betray him***— **ουτος γαρ ημελλεν αυτον παραδιδοναι**, He who was about to deliver him up. By referring to this matter so often, did not our blessed Lord intend to warn Judas? Was not the evil fully exposed to his view? And who dare say that it was impossible for him to avoid what he had so often been warned against? When the temptation did take place, and his heart, in purpose, had brought forth the sin, might he not have relented, fallen at his injured master's feet, acknowledge his black offense, and implored forgiveness? And surely his most merciful Lord would have freely pardoned him.

1. ON the subject of the disciples sailing off without Christ, and the storm that overtook them, it may be necessary to make a few observations, chiefly for the encouragement of the laborers in God's vineyard. It was the duty of the disciples to depart at the commandment of the Lord, though the storm was great, and the wind contrary. It was their duty to tug at the oar, expecting the appearing of their Lord and master. So it is the duty of the ministers of Christ to embark, and sail even into the sea of persecution and dangerous trial, in order to save souls. There may be darkness for a time—they must row. The waves may rise high—they must row on. The wind may be contrary—still they must tug at the oar. Jesus will appear, lay the storm, and calm the sea, and they shall have souls for their hire. The vessel will get to land, and speedily too. There are particular times in which the Lord pours out his Spirit, and multitudes are quickly convinced

and converted. "Alas!" says one, "I see no fruit of my labor; no return of my prayers and tears." Take courage, man; tug on; thou shalt not labor in vain, nor spend thy strength for nought. What he does thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Great grace, and great peace await thee; take courage, and tug on!

2. When a man forsakes the living God, and gives way to avarice, which appears to have been the case with Judas, he is fit for any thing in which Satan may choose to employ him. Beware of the love of money! The cursed lust of gold induced a disciple of Christ to betray his God: and has it not been the ruin of millions since? Few people love money merely for its own sake: they love it because it can provide them with the necessaries, conveniences, and comforts of life; those who have not God for their portion incessantly long after these things, and therefore are covetous. While a man watches unto prayer, and abides in the love of Christ Jesus the Lord, so long he is safe, for he is contented with the lot which God has given him in life. Reader, art thou like Judas (in his best state) put in trust for the poor, or for the Church of Christ. Do not covet; and take heed that thou grudge not; nor permit thy heart to be hardened by repeated sights and tales of wo. Thou art but a steward; act faithfully, and act affectionately. Because the ointment that prefigured the death of our Lord was not applied just as Judas would have it, he took offense; betrayed and sold his master; saw and wished to remedy his transgression; despaired and hanged himself. Behold the fruit of covetousness! To what excesses and miseries the love of money may lead, God alone can comprehend. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.



## CHAPTER 7.

*Jesus continues in Galilee, 1. He is desired to go to the feast of tabernacles, 2-5. His answer, 6-9. He goes up, and the Jews seek him at the feast, 10-13. He teaches in the temple, 14-24. The Jews are confounded by his preaching, 25-27. He continues to teach; they wish to slay him, 28-30. Many of the people believe on him, 31. The Pharisees murmur, and our Lord reasons with them, 32-36. His preaching on the last day of the feast, 37-39. The people are greatly divided in their opinions concerning him, 40-44. The officers, who were sent by the Pharisees to take him, return, and because they did not bring him, their employers are offended, 45-49. Nicodemus reasons with them, 50-53.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7.

**Verse 1. *After these things***— St. John passes from the preceding discourse of our Lord, which he delivered a little before the passover, John 6:4, to the Feast of Tabernacles, which happened six months after, and thus omits many things mentioned by the other evangelists, which our blessed Lord said and did during that time. He had already gone over Galilee four or five times; and he continued there, because he found that the hatred of the Jews was such that they would kill him if they could meet with him in Judea; and his time to suffer was not yet come.

***For he would not walk in Jewry***— Instead of this, some MSS., versions, and fathers read, *ουγαρ ειχεν εξουσιαν*, he had not authority, or liberty to walk, etc. That is, he was no longer tolerated, and could not preach publicly in Judea, but at the risk of his life. He found greater scope for the exercise of his important ministry in Galilee than in Judea, as the chief priests, etc., were continually plotting his death.

**Verse 2. *Feast of tabernacles***— This feast was celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month Tisri, answering to the last half of our September, and the first half of October. This month was the seventh of the ecclesiastical, and first of the civil, year. The feast took its name from the tents which were erected about the temple, in public places, in courts, and on the flat

roofs of their houses, and in gardens; in which the Jews dwelt for eight days, in commemoration of the forty years during which their fathers dwelt in the wilderness. It was one of the three solemn annual feasts in which all the males were obliged, by the law, to appear at Jerusalem.

This feast was celebrated in the following manner. All the people cut down branches of palm trees, willows, and myrtles, (and tied them together with gold and silver cords, or with ribbons,) which they carried with them all day, took them into their synagogues, and kept them by them while at prayers. On the other days of the feast they carried them with them into the temple and walked round the altar with them in their hands, singing, Hosanna! i.e. Save, we beseech thee!-the trumpets sounding on all sides. To this feast St. John seems to refer, Revelation 7:9, 10, where he represents the saints standing before the throne, with palm branches in their hands, singing, Salvation to God, etc. On the seventh day of the feast, they went seven times round the altar, and this was called Hosanna rabba, the great Hosanna. See the notes on Matthew 21:9. But the ceremony at which the Jews testified most joy was that of pouring out the water, which was done on the eighth day of the feast. A priest drew some water out of the pool Siloam, in a golden vessel, and brought it into the temple; and at the time of the morning sacrifice, while the members of the sacrifice were on the altar, he went up and poured this water mingled with wine upon it, the people all the while singing, with transports of joy, Isaiah 12, especially Isaiah 12:6: With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. To this part of the ceremony, our Lord appears to allude in ver. 37, of this chapter. {John 7:37.}

During this feast many sacrifices were offered. On the first day, besides the ordinary sacrifices, they offered, as a burnt-offering, thirteen calves, two rams, and fourteen lambs with the offerings of flour and the libations of wine that were to accompany them. They offered also a goat for a sin-offering. On all the succeeding days they offered the same sacrifices, only abating one of the calves each day, so that when the seventh day came, they had but seven calves to offer. On the eighth day, which was kept with greater solemnity than the rest, they offered but one calf, one ram, and seven lambs, for a burnt-offering, and one goat for a sin-offering, with the usual offerings and libations. On this day, they also offered in the temple the first fruits of their latter crops, or of those things which come

latest to maturity. During the feast, the 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, and 119th Psalms were sung. Leo of Modena says that, though Moses appointed but eight days, yet custom and the devotion of the people have added a ninth to it, which is called the joy of the law, because that on it they complete the reading of the Pentateuch. See Calmet's Com. and Dict., and father Lamy. For the law relative to this institution, see Leviticus 23:39, 40, etc., and the notes there; and Numbers 29:16. etc.

**Verse 3. *His brethren-said***— It is generally supposed that these were the children of the sisters of his mother Mary; but some of the ancients have stated that Joseph had several children by a former wife. See the account of the evangelist prefixed to this Gospel. No solid proof can be alleged against this; nor can we pretend to say that these were not the children of Joseph and Mary. Our blessed Lord, it is true, was her first born, while she was yet a virgin; but no man can prove that he was her last. It is an article of faith, in the Popish Church, to believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary; and in this respect, without any reason, several Protestants seem to be Papists. However this may be, it is certain that the Hebrews gave the name of brethren to all the relatives of a particular family. See Genesis 31:32, 46.

***That thy disciples also may see***— That is, the disciples which he had made two years and six months before, at the Passover: John 2:23.

**Verse 4. *No man that doeth any thing in secret***, etc.— They took it for granted that Christ was influenced by the same spirit which themselves felt; and that therefore he should use every opportunity of exhibiting himself to the public, that he might get into repute; and they hoped that a part of his honor would be reflected back upon themselves, as being his near relations. They seem to have said: "It is too little to employ thyself in working miracles in Galilee, in the country, and in small villages, among an ignorant and credulous people, from whom thou canst not get much credit: go to Jerusalem, the capital, and among the learned doctors, in the presence of the whole nation assembled at this feast, work thy miracles, and get thyself a name."

**Verse 5. *Neither did his brethren believe in him***.— They did not receive him as the promised Messiah; but, having seen so many of his miracles, they could not but consider him as an eminent prophet. They supposed

that, if he were the Messiah, he would wish to manifest himself as such to the world; and, because he did not do so, they did not believe that he was the salvation of Israel.

**Verse 6. *My time is not yet come***— It is probable our Lord meant no more than this, that he had some business to transact before he could go to Jerusalem; but his brethren, having nothing to hinder them might set off immediately. Others think he speaks of his passion: My time of suffering is not yet come: as ye are still in friendship with the world, ye need not be under any apprehension of danger: ye may go when ye please. The first sense I think is the best.

**Verse 7. *The world cannot hate you***— The Jews will not persecute you, because ye are in their sentiments and interests. Ye also expect a worldly Messiah.

***But me it hateth***— Because I condemn its injustice, its pride, its ambition, and its maxims, by my life and doctrine. It is very likely that the term world means here the Jewish people only: this is an acceptation in which **ὁ κόσμος** frequently occurs in this Gospel. See on John 17. {John 17:1-26}

**Verse 8. *I go not up yet unto this feast***— Porphyry accuses our blessed Lord of falsehood, because he said here, I will not go to this feast, and yet afterwards he went; and some interpreters have made more ado than was necessary, in order to reconcile this seeming contradiction. To me the whole seems very simple and plain. Our Lord did not say, I will not go to this feast; but merely, I go not yet, **οὐπω**, or am not going, i.e. at present; because, as he said John 7:6, and repeats here, his time was not yet come—he had other business to transact before he could go. And it is very likely that his business detained him in Galilee till the feast was half over: for we do not find him at Jerusalem till the middle of the feast, John 7:14, i.e. till the feast had been begun four days. He might also be unwilling to go at that time, there being such a great concourse of people on the road to Jerusalem, and his enemies might say that he had availed himself of this time and multitude in order to excite sedition.

**Verse 10. *But when his brethren were gone up***— Having despatched his business, and the concourse of people being now past, he went up also.

**Verse 11. *Then the Jews sought him***— By Jews here are to be understood the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers of the people, and not the inhabitants of the province of Judea. It appears, from the following verses, that many of the people were prejudiced in his favor, but they dared not to own it publicly for fear of the Jews, i.e. for fear of the rulers of the people.

**Verse 12. *Some said, He is a good man***— The multitude were divided in their opinions concerning him: those who knew him best said, He is a good man. Those who spoke according to the character given him by the priests, etc., said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Those who spoke evil of him spoke out, because they had the rulers on their side; but those who spoke good of him were obliged to do it in private, because they feared these rulers. Calumny and slander are among the privileged orders; they stalk abroad with their thousand brazen mouths, and blast the reputation of the followers of God. Benevolence and candor are only on sufferance; and a whisper in secret is the most they are permitted to give in behalf of Christ and his followers, whose laws and maxims condemn a vicious world, and goad it to revenge.

**Verse 14. *The midst of the feast***— Though the canons required him to be there on the first day, for the performance of a great variety of rites, yet, as these were in general the invention of their doctors, he might think it very proper neither to attend nor perform them.

**Verse 15. *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?***— The Jewish learning consisted in the knowledge of their own scriptures, and the traditions of their elders. In this learning our blessed Lord excelled. No person ever spoke with more grace and dignity, or knew better how to make a more proper use, or a happier application, of Jewish allegories and parables; because none ever penetrated the sense of the Scriptures as he did; none ever cited them more successfully, or ever showed their accomplishment in so complete and satisfactory a manner. As these branches of learning were taught at the Jewish schools, and our Lord had never attended there, they were astonished to find him excelling in that sort of learning, of which they themselves professed to be the sole teachers.

**Verse 16. *My doctrine is not mine***— Our blessed Lord, in the character of Messiah, might as well say, My doctrine is not mine, as an ambassador might say, I speak not my own words, but his who sent me: and he speaks

these words to draw the attention of the Jews from the teaching of man to the teaching of God; and to show them that he was the promised Messiah, the very person on whom, according to the prophet, (Isaiah 11:2,) the Spirit of Jehovah—the Spirit of wisdom, counsel, understanding, might, and knowledge, should rest.

**Verse 17.** *If any man wilt do his will*, etc.— I will give you a sure rule by which ye may judge of my doctrine: If you really wish to do the will of God, begin the practice of it; and take my doctrine, and apply it to all that you know God requires of man; and if you find one of my precepts contrary to the nature, perfections, and glory of God, or to the present or eternal welfare of men, then ye shall be at liberty to assert that my doctrine is human and erroneous, and God has not sent me. But if, on the contrary, ye find that the sum and substance of my preaching is, That men shall love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves; and that this doctrine must bring glory to God in the highest, while it produces peace and good will among men; then acknowledge that God has visited you, and receive me as the Messiah promised to your fathers.

**Verse 18.** *He that speaketh of himself*, etc.— I will give you another rule, whereby you shall know whether I am from God or not: If I speak so as to procure my own glory, to gratify vanity, or to secure and promote my secular interests, then reject me as a deceiver and as a false prophet. But if I act only to promote the glory of God, to induce all men to love and obey him; if I propose nothing but what leads to the perfection of his law, and the accomplishment of its ordinances, you cannot help acknowledging me at least for a true prophet; and, if you add to this the proofs which I have given of my mission and power, you must acknowledge me as the mighty power of God, and the promised Messiah.

*And no unrighteousness is in him*.— Or, there is no falsehood in him: so the word **αδικια** should be translated here; and it is frequently used by the Septuagint for שקר sheker, a lie, falsehood, etc. See in Psalm 52:3; 119:29, 69, 104, 163; 144:8. This is its meaning in Romans 2:8; where **αδικια**, falsehood, is put in opposition to **αληθεια**, truth.

**Verse 19.** *Did not Moses give you the law*, etc.— The scribes and Pharisees announced our Lord to the multitude as a deceiver; and they

grounded their calumny on this, that he was not an exact observer of the law, for he had healed a man on the Sabbath day, John 5:9, 10; and consequently must be a false prophet. Now they insinuated, that the interests of religion required him to be put to death: 1. As a violator of the law; and, 2. as a false prophet and deceiver of the people. To destroy this evil reasoning, our Lord speaks in this wise: If I deserve death for curing a man on the Sabbath, and desiring him to carry home his bed, which you consider a violation of the law, you are more culpable than I am, for you circumcise a child on the Sabbath, which requires much more bustle, and is of so much less use than what I have done to the infirm man. But, if you think you do not violate the law by circumcising a child on the Sabbath, how can you condemn me for having cured one of yourselves, who has been afflicted thirty and eight years? If you consider my conduct with the same eye with which you view your own, far from finding any thing criminal in it, you will see much reason to give glory to God. Why, therefore, go ye about to kill me, as a transgressor of the law, when not one of yourselves keeps it?

**Verse 20. *Thou hast a devil***— The crowd, who made this answer, were not in the secret of the chief priests. They could not suppose that any person desired to put him to death for healing a diseased man; and therefore, in their brutish manner, they say, Thou hast a demon-thou art beside thyself, and slanderest the people, for none of them desires to put thee to death. The Codex Cyprius (K,) four others, and the margin of the later Syriac, attribute this answer to the Jews, i.e. those who were seeking his life. If the reading, therefore, of **οι ιουδαιοι**, the Jews, be received instead of **ο οχλος**, the multitude, it serves to show the malice of his enemies in a still stronger light: for, fearing lest their wish to put him to death might not be gratified, and that his teaching should prevail among the common people; to ruin his credit, and prevent his usefulness, they give out that he was possessed by a demon; and that, though he might be pitied as a miserable man, yet he must not be attended to as a teacher of righteousness. Malice and envy are ever active and indefatigable, leaving no stone unturned, no mean unused, that they may win the object of their resentment. See the note on John 7:26.

**Verse 21. *I have done one work***— That of curing the impotent man, already referred to. See John 5:9.

*And ye all marvel.*— or, ye all marvel because of this. Some have **δια τουτο**, in connection with **θαυμαζετε**, which the common pointing makes the beginning of the next verse, and which, in our common version, is translated therefore; but this word conveys no meaning at all, in the connection in which it is thus placed. Proof of this construction Kypke gives from Themistius, Strabo, and Aelian. All the eminent critics are on the side of this arrangement of the words.

**Verse 22. *But of the fathers***— That is, it came from the patriarchs. Circumcision was not, properly speaking, one of the laws of the Mosaic institution, it having been given at first to Abraham, and continued among his posterity till the giving of the law: Genesis 17:9, 10, etc.

***Ye-circumcise a man.***— That is, a male child: for every male child was circumcised when eight days old; and if the eighth day after its birth happened to be a Sabbath, it was nevertheless circumcised, that the law might not be broken, which had enjoined the circumcision to take place at that time, Leviticus 12:3. From this and several other circumstances it is evident that the keeping of the Sabbath, even in the strictest sense of the word, ever admitted of the works of necessity and mercy to be done on it; and that those who did not perform such works on that day, when they had opportunity, were properly violators of every law founded on the principles of mercy and justice. If the Jews had said, Why didst thou not defer the healing of the sick man till the ensuing day? He might have well answered, Why do ye not defer the circumcising of your children to the ensuing day, when the eighth day happens to be a Sabbath?-which is a matter of infinitely less consequence than the restoration of this long-afflicted man.

**Verse 23. *Every whit whole***— The law of circumcision required the removal of a small portion of flesh, which was considered a blot and reproach among the Hebrews, because it confounded them with the nations who were not in covenant with God. Christ, to this, opposes the complete cure of the infirm man, who was diseased throughout his whole body: if the one was permitted on the Sabbath day, for the reason already alleged, surely the other had stronger reasons to recommend it.

Some think that the original words, **ολον ανθρωπον**, should be translated, the whole man; and that the meaning is, that the blessed Savior made him



whole both in body and soul. This makes the miracle the greater, and shows still more forcibly the necessity of doing it without delay.

Battier ap. Wets. supposes that, instead of *ολον, χωλον* should be read-I have made a MAIMED man whole; but there is no countenance for this reading in any of the MSS;., versions, or fathers.

**Verse 24. *Judge not according to the appearance***— Attend to the law, not merely in the letter, but in its spirit and design. Learn that the law which commands men to rest on the Sabbath day is subordinate to the law of mercy and love, which requires them to be ever active to promote God's glory in the comfort and salvation of their fellow creatures; and endeavor to judge of the merit or demerit of an action, not from the first impression it may make upon your prejudices but from its tendency, and the motives of the person, as far as it is possible for you to acquaint yourselves with them; still believing the best, where you have no certain proof to the contrary.

**Verse 26. *That this is the very Christ?***— In most of the common printed editions *αληθως* is found, the VERY Christ; but the word is wanting in BDKLTX, twenty-two others, several editions; all the Arabic, Wheelock's Persic, the Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, and all the Itala but one, Origen, Epiphanius, Cyril, Isidore, Pelusian, and Nonnus. Grotius, Mill, Bengel, and Griesbach, decide against it. Bishop Pearce says, I am of opinion that this second *αληθως*, in this verse, should be omitted, it seeming quite unnecessary, if not inaccurate, when the words *αληθως εγνωσαν*, had just preceded it.

Calmet observes that the multitude which heard our Lord at this time was composed of three different classes of persons: 1. The rulers, priests, and Pharisees, declared enemies of Christ. 2. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, who knew the sentiments of their rulers concerning him. 3. The strangers, who from different quarters had come up to Jerusalem to the feast, and who heard Christ attentively, being ignorant of the designs of the rulers, etc., against him.

Our Lord addresses himself in this discourse principally to his enemies. The strange Jews were those who were astonished when Christ said, John 7:20, that they sought to kill him, having no such design themselves, and

not knowing that others had. And the Jews of Jerusalem were those who, knowing the disposition of the rulers, and seeing Christ speak openly, no man attempting to seize him, addressed each other in the foregoing words, Do the rulers know indeed that this is the Christ? imagining that the chief priests, etc., had at last been convinced that Jesus was the MESSIAH.

**Verse 27. *No man knoweth whence he is.***— The generality of the people knew very well that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, in the city, and of the family, of David; see John 7:42. But, from Isaiah 53:8, Who shall declare his generation? they probably thought that there should be something so peculiarly mysterious in his birth, or in the manner of his appearing, that no person could fully understand. Had they considered his miraculous conception, they would have felt their minds relieved on this point. The Jews thought that the Messiah, after his birth, would hide himself for some considerable time; and that when he began to preach no man should know where he had been hidden, and whence he had come. The rabbins have the following proverb: Three things come unexpectedly: 1. A thing found by chance. 2. The sting of a scorpion: and, 3. The Messiah. It was probably in reference to the above that the people said, No man knoweth whence he is. However, they might have spoken this of his parents. We know that the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem, of the family of David; but no man can know his parents: therefore they rejected him: John 6:42, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?

**Verse 28. *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am***— Perhaps they should be read interrogatively: Do ye both know me, and know whence I am? Our Lord takes them up on their own profession, and argues from it. Since you have got so much information concerning me, add this to it, to make it complete; viz. that I am not come of myself; am no self-created or self-authorized prophet; I came from God:-the testimony of John the Baptist, the descent of the Holy Ghost, the voice from heaven, the purity and excellence of my doctrine, and the multitude of my miracles, sufficiently attest this. Now, God is true who has borne testimony to me; but ye know him not, therefore it is that this testimony is disregarded.

**Verse 29. *But I know him: for I am from him***— Instead of εἰμ, I am, some editions, the Syriac Hieros. read εἰμι, I came, according to the

Attics. Nonnus confirms this reading by paraphrasing the word by **ἐλθῆλθα**, I came. As the difference between the two words lies only in the accents, and as these are not found in ancient MSS., it is uncertain which way the word was understood by them: nor is the matter of much moment; both words amount nearly to the same meaning and **εἰμι**, I came, seems too refined.

**Verse 31. *Will he do more miracles***— It was the belief of the Jews, and they founded it upon Isaiah 35:5, that, when the Messiah came, he would do all kinds of miracles; and, in order that they might have the fullest proof of the Divine mission of Christ, it had pleased God to cause miracles to cease for between four and five hundred years, and that John the Baptist himself had not wrought any. His miracles, therefore, were a full proof of his Divine mission.

**Verse 32. *The people murmured such things***— The people began to be convinced that he was the Messiah; and this being generally whispered about, the Pharisees, etc., thought it high time to put him to death, lest the people should believe on him; therefore they sent officers to take him.

**Verse 33. *Yet a little while am I with you***— As he knew that the Pharisees had designed to take and put him to death, and that in about six months from this time, as some conjecture, he should be crucified, he took the present opportunity of giving this information to the common people, who were best disposed towards him, that they might lay their hearts to his teaching, and profit by it, while they had the privilege of enjoying it.

The word **αὐτοῖς**, to them, in the beginning of this verse, is wanting in BDEGLHMS, more than eighty others, both the Syriac, later Persic, Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, Gothic, Slavonic, Saxon, most copies of the Vulgate and the Itala. It is omitted also by Euthymius, Theophylact, Augustin, and Bede. Our Lord did not speak these words to the officers who came to apprehend him, as **αὐτοῖς** here implies, but to the common people, merely to show that he was not ignorant of the designs of the Pharisees, though they had not yet been able to put them into practice.

**Verse 34. *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me***— When the Roman armies come against you, you will vainly seek for a deliverer. But ye shall be cut off in your sins, because ye did not believe in me; and where I am-in

the kingdom of glory, ye cannot come; for nothing that is unholy shall enter into the new Jerusalem. In this, and the thirty-sixth verse, εἰμι, I am, is read by several εἰμι, I came, as in the twenty-ninth verse; and in these two last places the Aethiopic, Arabic, three copies of the Itala, Nonnus, and Theophylact, agree. See the note on John 7:29.

**Verse 35. *The dispersed among the Gentiles***— Or Greeks. By the dispersed, are meant here the Jews who were scattered through various parts of that empire which Alexander the Great had founded, in Greece, Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor, where the Greek language was used, and where the Jewish Scriptures in the Greek version of the Septuagint were read. Others suppose that the Gentiles themselves are meant—others, that the ten tribes which had been long lost are here intended.

**Verse 37. *In the last day, that great day of the feast***— This was the eighth day, and was called the great day, because of certain traditional observances, and not on account of any excellence which it derived from the original institution. On the seven days they professed to offer sacrifices for the seventy nations of the earth, but on the eighth day they offered sacrifices for Israel; therefore the eighth day was more highly esteemed than any of the others. It is probably to this that the evangelist refers when he calls the last day the great day of the feast. See the account of the feast of tabernacles, in the note on John 7:2. It was probably when they went to draw water from the pool Siloam, and while they were pouring it out at the foot of the altar, that our Lord spoke these words; for, as that ceremony pointed out the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, our Lord, who was the fountain whence it was to proceed, called the people to himself, that, by believing on him, they might be made partakers of that inestimable benefit.

**Verse 38. *He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said***— He who receives me as the Messiah, according to what the Scripture has said concerning me; my person, birth, conduct, preaching, and miracles, being compared with what is written there as ascertaining the true Messiah. Out of his belly—from his heart and soul; for in his soul shall this Spirit dwell.

***Living water.***— As a true spring is ever supplied with water from the great deep, with which it has communication, so shall the soul of the genuine believer be supplied with light, life, love, and liberty, and all the

other graces of the indwelling Spirit, from the indwelling Christ. The Jews frequently compare the gifts and influences of the Holy Spirit to water in general—to rain, fountains, wells, rivers, etc., etc. The Scriptures abound in this metaphor. Psalm 36:8, 9; Isaiah 44:3, 4; Joel 2:23.

**Verse 39. *Was not yet given***— **δεδομενον**, given is added by the Codex Vaticanus, (B.) the Syriac, all the Persic, later Syriac with an asterisk, three copies of the Slavonic, Vulgate, and all the Itala but three; and several of the primitive fathers. The word seems necessary to the completion of the sense.

Certain measures of the Holy Spirit had been vouchsafed from the beginning of the world to believers and unbelievers: but that abundant effusion of his graces spoken of by Joel, Joel 2:28, which peculiarly characterized the Gospel times, was not granted till after the ascension of Christ: 1. Because this Spirit in its plenitude was to come in consequence of his atonement; and therefore could not come till after his crucifixion. 2. It was to supply the place of Christ to his disciples and to all true believers; and therefore it was not necessary till after the removal of his bodily presence from among them. See our Lord's own words, John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15.

**Verse 40. *Of a truth this is the Prophet.***— The great prophet, or teacher, spoken of by Moses, Deuteronomy 18:15, which they improperly distinguished from the Messiah, John 7:41. Some no doubt knew that by the prophet, the Messiah was meant; but others seem to have thought that one of the ancient prophets should be raised from the dead, and precede the appearing of the Messiah.

**Verse 41. *Shalt Christ come out of Galilee?***— As the prophets had declared that the Messiah was to come from the tribe of Judah, and from the family of David, and should be born in the city of Bethlehem, these Jews, imagining that Christ had been born in Galilee, concluded that he could not be the Messiah. Had they examined the matter a little farther, they would have found that he had his birth exactly as the prophets had foretold; but, for want of this necessary examination, they continued in unbelief, and rejected the Lord that bought them. Many still lose their souls nearly in the same way. They suffer themselves to be led away by common report, and become prejudiced against the truth, refuse to give it a

fair hearing, or to examine for themselves. It is on this ground that deign and irreligion have established themselves, and still maintain their posts.

**Verse 42. *Where David was?***— That is, where he was born, 1 Samuel 16:1, 4, and where he was before he became king in Israel.

**Verse 43. *There was a division***— *σχισμα*, a schism; they were divided in sentiment, and separated into parties. This is the true notion of schism.

**Verse 44. *Would have taken him***— Or, they wished to seize him. And this they would have done, and destroyed him too at that time, had they been unanimous; but their being divided in opinion, John 7:43, was the cause, under God, why his life was at that time preserved. How true are the words of the prophet: The wrath of man shall praise thee; and the remainder thereof thou wilt restrain! Psalm 76:10.

**Verse 45. *Then came the officers***— They had followed him for several days, seeking for a proper opportunity to seize on him, when they might fix some charge of sedition, etc., upon him; but the more they listened, the more they were convinced of his innocence, purity, and consummate wisdom.

**Verse 46. *Never man spake like this man.***— Though these officers had gone on the errand of their masters, they had not entered into their spirit. They were sent to apprehend a seditious man, and a false prophet. They came where Jesus taught; they found him to be a different person to the description they received from their masters, and therefore did not attempt to touch or molest him. No doubt they expected when they told their employers the truth, that they would have commended them, and acknowledged their own mistake: but these simple people were not in the secret of their masters' malice. They heard, they felt, that no man ever spoke with so much grace, power, majesty, and eloquence. They had never heard a discourse so affecting and persuasive. So Jesus still speaks to all who are simple of heart. He speaks pardon-he speaks holiness-he speaks salvation to all who have ears to hear. No man ever did or can speak as he does. He teaches THE TRUTH, the whole TRUTH, and nothing but the TRUTH.

**Verse 48. *Have any of the rulers-believed on him?***— Very few. But is this a proof that he is not of God? No, truly. If he were of the world, the

world would love its own. The religion of Christ has been in general rejected by the rulers of this world. A life of mortification, self-denial, and humility, does not comport with the views of those who will have their portion in this life. It has ever been a mark of the truth of God that the great, the mighty, and the wise have in general rejected it. They are too much occupied with this world to attend to the concerns of the next.

**Verse 49. *This people***— ὁ οἶκος, This rabble. The common people were treated by the Pharisees with the most sovereign contempt: they were termed עַם הָאָרֶץ am ha-arets, people of the earth; and were not thought worthy to have a resurrection to eternal life. Wagenseil and Schoettgen have given many proofs of the contempt in which the common people were held by the Pharisees. Those who were disciples of any of the rabbins were considered as being in a much better state. When they paid well, they purchased their masters' good opinion.

**Verse 50. *Nicodemus-being one of them***— That is, a Pharisee, and a ruler of the Jews: see on John 3:1.

**Verse 51. *Doth our law judge any man***— τὸν ἀνθρώπον, the man, i.e. who is accused. Perhaps Nicodemus did not refer so much to any thing in the law of Moses, as to what was commonly practiced among them. Josephus says, Ant. b. xiv. c. 9. s. 3, That the law has forbidden any man to be put to death, though wicked, unless he be first condemned to die by the Sanhedrin. It was probably to this law, which is not expressly mentioned in the five books of Moses, that Nicodemus here alludes. See laws relative to this point, Deuteronomy 17:8, etc.; Deuteronomy 19:15.

**Verse 52. *Art thou also of Galilee?***— They knew very well that he was not; but they spoke this by way of reproach. As if they had said, thou art no better than he is, as thou takest his part. Many of the Galileans had believed on him, Which the Jews considered to be a reproach. Art thou his disciple, as the Galileans are?

***Search, and look***— Examine the Scriptures, search the public registers, and thou wilt see that out of Galilee there ariseth no prophet. Neither the Messiah, nor any other prophet, has ever proceeded from Galilee, nor ever can. This conclusion, says Calmet, was false and impertinent: false, because Jonah was of Gathheper, in Galilee: see 2 Kings 14:25, compared

with Joshua 19:13. The Prophet Nahum was also a Galilean, for he was of the tribe of Simeon; and some suppose that Malachi was of the same place. The conclusion was false, because there not having been a prophet from any particular place was no argument that there never could be one, as the place had not been proscribed.

**Verse 53.** *And every man went*, etc.— The authority and influence of Nicodemus, in this case, was so great that the Sanhedrin broke up without being able to conclude any thing. As the feast was now ended, they were not obliged to continue any longer in or about Jerusalem; and therefore all returned to their respective dwellings.

This verse and the first eleven verses of the following chapter are wanting in several MSS. Some of those which retain the paragraph mark it with obelisks, as a proof of spuriousness. Those which do retain it have it with such a variety of reading as is no where else found in the sacred writings. Professor Griesbach leaves the whole paragraph in the text with notes of doubtfulness. Most of the modern critics consider it as resting on no solid authority.



The following in the left-hand column, is a literal translation of the whole as it stands in the Codex Bezae. That on the right is a connected view of it from other manuscripts.

John 7:63; 8:1-11.:

From the Codex Bezae.

John 7:53. And every one went to his own house.

John 8:1. And Jesus went to the mount of Olives.

2. But he came again early into-the temple, and all the people came unto him.

3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman unto him, taken in sin; and, setting her in the midst,

4. The priests say unto him, tempting him, that they might have an accusation against him, Teacher, this woman was taken committing adultery, in the very act:

5. Now Moses, in the law, gave orders to stone

From other MSS.

53. And every one went away to his own people. (τα ιδια αυτου) Al. place.

1. And Jesus went out to the mount of Olives.

2. But very early in the morning Jesus came again into the temple, and all the people came; and having sat down he taught them.

3. And the chief priests and the Pharisees bring unto him a woman taken in adultery; and, having set her in the midst,

4. They spoke, tempting him, Teacher, we found this one committing adultery, in the very act:

5. And in the law Moses commanded us to stone

such: but what dost thou say now?

6. But Jesus, having stooped down, wrote with his finger upon the ground.

7. But as they continued asking he lifted himself, and said unto them, Let him who is without sin among you first cast a stone at her.

8. And stooping down again, he wrote with his finger upon the ground.

9. And each of the Jews went out, beginning from the oldest, so that all went out: and he was left alone, the woman being in the midst.

10. And Jesus lifting up himself, said to the

such: What dost thou say concerning her?

6. But this they spoke tempting him, that they might find an accusation against him: but he, knowing it, stooped down, (Al. bowed down,) and wrote with his finger upon the ground, seeming as if he did not hear. (Al. pretending.)

7. But as they continued up asking him, having looked up, he saith, Let him who is without sin among you, first cast a stone at her.

8. And stooping down again, he wrote with his finger upon the ground (the sins of every one of them.)

9. And each one of them went out, (Al. and hearing these things they departed one by one,) beginning from the oldest; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman in the midst of them.

10. Jesus therefore looking up, saw her, and said,

woman, Where are they?  
Hath no one condemned  
thee?

11. Then she said unto  
him, No one, sir. Then  
he said, Neither do I  
condemn thee; go, and from  
this time sin no more.

Woman, where are thy  
accusers? Hath no one  
condemned thee?

11. Then she said, No  
one, sir. And Jesus said,  
Neither will I judge thee;  
go away, and henceforth  
sin no more.

See the notes on this account in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 8.

*The story of the woman taken in adultery, 1-11. Jesus declares himself the light of the world, 12. The Pharisees cavil, 13. Jesus answers, and shows his authority, 14-20. He delivers a second discourse, in which he convicts them of sin, and foretells their dying in it, because of their unbelief, 21-24. They question him; he answers, and foretells his own death, 25-29. Many believe on him, in consequence of this last discourse, 30. To whom he gives suitable advice, 31, 32. The Jews again cavil, and plead the nobility and advantages of their birth, 33. Jesus shows the vanity of their pretensions, and the wickedness of their hearts, 34-47. They blaspheme, and Christ convicts and reproves them, and asserts his Divine nature, 48-58. They attempt to stone him, 59.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8.

**Verse 3. *A woman taken in adultery***— Some of the popish writers say that her name was Susanna; that she was espoused to an old decrepid man, named Manasseh; that she died a saint in Spain, whither she had followed St. James. These accounts the judicious Calmet properly terms fables.

It is allowed that adultery was exceedingly common at this time, so common that they had ceased to put the law in force against it. The waters of jealousy were no longer drunk, the culprits or those suspected of this crime, being so very numerous; and the men who were guilty themselves dared not try their suspected wives, as it was believed the waters would have no evil effect upon the wife, if the husband himself had been criminal. See the whole of the process on the waters of jealousy in the notes on Numbers 5:14, etc.; and see at the end of chap. 18. {John 18:40}

**Verse 5. *That such should be stoned***— It is not strictly true that Moses ordered adultery in general to be punished by stoning. The law simply says that the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death. Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22. The rabbins say they were strangled. This they affirm was the ordinary mode of punishment, where the species of

death was not marked in the law, If the person guilty of an act of this kind had been betrothed, but not married, she was to be stoned: Deuteronomy 22:23. But if she was the daughter of a priest, she was to be burned alive: Leviticus 16:9. It appears, from Ezekiel 16:38, 40, that adulteresses in the time of that prophet were stoned, and pierced with a sword.

Selden and Fagius suppose that this woman's case was the same with that mentioned, Deuteronomy 22:23. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall stone them with stones that they die, the damsel because she cried not, and the man because he hath humbled his neighbors wife. As the Pharisees spoke of stoning the woman, it is possible this was her case; and some suppose that the apparent indulgence with which our Lord treated her insinuates that she had suffered some sort of violence, though not entirely innocent. Therefore he said, I do not condemn thee, i.e. to death, because violence had been used. Sin no more. Nevertheless thou art in certain respects guilty; thou mightest have made more resistance.

**Verse 6. *That they might have to accuse him.***— Had our Lord condemned the woman to death, they might have accused him to Pilate, as arrogating to himself the power of life and death, which the Romans had taken away from the Jews; besides, the Roman laws did not condemn an adulteress to be put to death. On the other hand, if he had said she should not be put to death, they might have represented him to the people as one who decided contrary to the law, and favored the crime of which the woman was accused.

***With his finger wrote***— Several MSS. add their sins who accused her, and the sins of all men. There are many idle conjectures concerning what our Lord wrote on the ground, several of which may be seen in Calmet.

We never find that Christ wrote any thing before or after this; and what he wrote at this time we know not. On this the pious Quesnel makes the following reflections: —

“1. Since Jesus Christ never wrote but once that we hear of in his whole life; 2. since he did it only in the dust; 3. since it was only to avoid condemning a sinner; and, 4. since he would not have that which he wrote so much as known; let men learn from hence never to

write but when it is necessary or useful; to do it with humility and modesty; and to do it on a principle of charity. How widely does Christ differ from men! He writes his Divine thoughts in the dust: they wish to have theirs cut in marble, and engraved on brass.” Schools for children are frequently held under trees in Bengal, and the children who are beginning to learn write the letters of the alphabet in the dust. This saves pen, ink, and paper.

WARD.

**Verse 7. *He that is without sin***— *αναμαρτητος*, meaning the same kind of sin, adultery, fornication, etc. Kypke has largely proved that the verb *αμαρτανειν* is used in this sense by the best Greek writers.

***Let him first cast a stone at her.***— Or, upon her, *επ' αυτη*. The Jewish method of stoning, according to the rabbins, was as follows: The culprit, half naked, the hands tied behind the back, was placed on a scaffold, ten or twelve feet high; the witnesses, who stood with her, pushed her off with great force: if she was killed by the fall there was nothing farther done; but, if she was not, one of the witnesses took up a very large stone, and dashed it upon her breast, which generally was the coup de grace, or finishing stroke. This mode of punishment seems referred to, Matthew 21:44. However, this procedure does not appear to have been always attended to. See Leviticus 24:16, and ver. 59 of this chapter. {John 8:59}

**Verse 9. *Being convicted by their own conscience***— So it is likely they were all guilty of similar crimes. Their own is not in the original, and is needless: being convicted by conscience is expressive enough.

***Beginning at the eldest even unto the last***— *απο των πρεσβυτερων εως των εσχατων*, from the most honorable to those of the least repute. In this sense the words are undoubtedly to be understood.

***The woman standing in the midst.***— But if they all went out, how could she be in the midst? It is not said that all the people whom our Lord had been instructing went out, but only her accusers: see John 8:2. The rest undoubtedly continued with their teacher.

**Verse 11. *Neither do I condemn thee***— Bishop Pearce says: “It would have been strange if Jesus, when he was not a magistrate, and had not the

witnesses before him to examine them, and when she had not been tried and condemned by the law and legal judges, should have taken upon him to condemn her. This being the case, it appears why Jesus avoided giving an answer to the question of the scribes and Pharisees, and also how little reason there is to conclude from hence that Christ seems in this case not enough to have discouraged adultery, though he called it a sin. And yet this opinion took place so early among the Christians, that the reading of this story was industriously avoided, in the lessons recited out of the Gospels, in the public service of the churches; as if Jesus's saying, I do not condemn thee, had given too much countenance to women guilty of that crime. In consequence of this, as it was never read in the churches, and is now not to be found in any of the Evangelistaria, and as it was probably marked in the MSS. as a portion not to be read there, this whole story, from John 8:1-11, inclusive, came, in length of time, to be left out in some MSS., though in the greater part it is still remaining." Thus far the judicious and learned bishop. How the passage stands in all the MSS. hitherto collated may be seen in Wetstein and Griesbach. After weighing what has been adduced in favor of its authenticity, and seriously considering its state in the MSS., as exhibited in the Var. Lect. of Griesbach, I must confess, the evidence in its favor does not appear to me to be striking. Yet I by no means would have it expunged from the text. Its absence from many MSS., and the confused manner in which it appears in others, may be readily accounted for on the principles laid down by Bishop Pearce above. It may however be necessary to observe, that a very perfect connection subsists between John 7:52 and John 8:12—all the intermediate verses having been omitted by MSS. of the first antiquity and authority. In some MSS. it is found at the end of this Gospel; in others a vacant place is left in this chapter; and in others it is placed after the 21st chapter of Luke. See at the end of this chapter. {John 8:59}

**Verse 12.** *Then spake Jesus again unto them*— Allowing the story about the woman taken in adultery to be authentic, and to stand here in its proper place, we may consider that our Lord, having begun to teach the people in the temple, was interrupted by the introduction of this woman by the scribes and Pharisees; and now, having dismissed them and the woman also, he resumes his discourse.

***I am the light of the world***— The fountain whence an intellectual light and spiritual understanding proceed: without me all is darkness, misery, and death. The Divine Being was, by the rabbins denominated, The light of the world. So in Bamidbar Rabba: “The Israelites said to God, O Lord of the universe, thou commandest us to light lamps to thee, yet thou art THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: and with thee the light dwelleth.” Our Lord, therefore, assumes here a well known character of the Supreme Being; and with this we find the Jews were greatly offended.

***Shall not walk in darkness***— He shall be saved from ignorance, infidelity, and sin. If he follow me, become my disciple, and believe on my name, he shall have my Spirit to bear witness with his, that he is a child of God. He shall have the light of life—such a light as brings and supports life. The sun, the fountain of light, is also the fountain of life: by his vivifying influences, all things live—neither animal nor vegetative life could exist, were it not for his influence. Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, Malachi 4:2, is the fountain of all spiritual and eternal LIFE. His light brings life with it, and they who walk in his light live in his life. This sentiment is beautifully expressed and illustrated in the following inimitable verse (all monosyllables except one word) of that second Spenser, Phineas Fletcher. Speaking of the conversion of a soul to God, he says: —

*“New LIGHT new LOVE, new LOVE new LIFE hath bred;  
A LIFE that lives by LOVE, and loves by LIGHT:  
A LOVE to him, to whom all LOVES are wed;  
A LIGHT, to whom the sun is darkest night:  
Eye’s LIGHT, heart’s LOVE, soul’s only LIFE he is:  
LIFE, soul, love, heart, LIGHT, eye, and all are his:  
He eye, LIGHT, heart, LOVE, soul; He all my joy and bliss.”*

*PURPLE ISLAND, Can. I. v. 7.*

Some suppose our Lord alludes to the custom of lighting lamps or torches, on the first day of the feast of tabernacles. But as these words seem to have been spoken the day after that last and great day of the feast, mentioned John 7:37, they may rather be considered as referring to the following custom: It has already been observed, that the Jews added a ninth day to this feast, which day they termed, The feast of joy for the law; and on that day they were accustomed to take all the sacred books out of the chest where they had been deposited, and put a lighted candle in



their place, in allusion to Proverbs 6:23: For the commandment is a LAMP (or CANDLE) and the law is life: or to Psalm 119:105: Thy word is a LAMP unto my feet, and a LIGHT unto my path. If this custom existed in the time of our Lord, it is most likely that it is to it he here alludes; as it must have happened about the same time in which these words were spoken. See Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. xxi.

As the Messiah was frequently spoken of by the prophets under the emblem of light, see Isaiah 60:1; 49:6; 9:2, the Pharisees must at once perceive that he intended to recommend himself to the people as the Messiah, when he said, I am the light of the world.

The rabbins think that the Messiah is intended in Genesis 1:8, And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. "From this we may learn that the holy and blessed God saw the light of the Messiah and his works before the world was created; and reserved it for the Messiah, and his generation, under the throne of his glory. Satan said to the holy and blessed God, For whom dost thou reserve that light which is under the throne of thy glory? God answered: For him who shall subdue thee, and overwhelm thee with confusion. Satan rejoined, Lord of the universe, show that person to me! God said, Come and see him. When he saw him, he was greatly agitated, and fell upon his face, saying, Truly this is the Messiah, who shall cast me and idolaters into hell." Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 6. This is a very remarkable saying; and, as it might have existed in the time of our Lord, to it he might have alluded in the verse before us. The thing itself is true: the Messiah is the light of the world, and by him Satan's empire of idolatry is destroyed in the world, and the kingdom of light and life established. See several similar testimonies in Schoettgen.

**Verse 13. *Thou bearest record***— As if they had said, Dost thou imagine that we shall believe thee, in a matter so important, on thy bare assertion? Had these people attended to the teaching and miracles of Christ, they would have seen that his pretensions to the Messiahship were supported by the most irrefragable testimony.

**Verse 14. *I know whence I came***— I came from God, and am going to God, and can neither do nor say any thing but what leads to and glorifies him.

**Verse 15. *Ye judge after the flesh***— Because I appear in the form of man, judging from this appearance, ye think I am but a mere man—pay attention to my teaching and miracles, and ye shall then see that nothing less than infinite wisdom and unlimited power could teach and do what I have taught and performed. Our Lord speaks here exactly in the character of an ambassador. Such a person does not bring a second with him to vouch his truth; his credentials from his king ascertain his character: he represents the king's person. So our Lord represents the Father as bearing witness with him. The miracles which he wrought were the proof from heaven that he was the promised Messiah: these were the great seal of all his pretensions.

**Verse 19. *Ye neither know me***, etc.— Ye know neither the Messiah, nor the God that sent him.

***If ye had known me***— If ye had received my teaching, ye would have got such an acquaintance with the nature and attributes of God as ye never could have had, and never can have any other way. That is a true saying, No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who lay in the bosom of the Father. he hath DECLARED him. The nature and perfections of God never can be properly known, but in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is worthy of remark that, in all this discourse, our blessed Lord ever speaks of the Father and himself as two distinct persons. Therefore, the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, as some persons vainly imagine; though it is plain enough that the completest unity and equality subsists between them.

**Verse 20. *The treasury***— Lightfoot observes, from the rabbins, that the treasury was in what was called the court of the women—that there were thirteen chests in it; in the thirteenth only the women were permitted to put their offerings. Probably the other twelve were placed there in reference to the twelve tribes; each perhaps inscribed with the name of one of Jacob's twelve sons.

It seems that our Lord sometimes sat in this court to teach the people. See Mark 12:41, etc.

***His hour was not yet come***.— The time was not arrived, in which he had determined to give himself up into the hands of his crucifiers.

**Verse 21. *Then said Jesus again unto them***— He had said the same things to them the day before. See John 7:34.

***Ye shall seek me***— When your calamities come upon you, ye shall in vain seek for the help of the Messiah, whom ye now reject, and whom ye shall shortly crucify.

**Verse 22. *Will he kill himself?***— They now understood that he spoke concerning his death; but before, John 7:35, they thought he spoke of going to some of the Grecian provinces, to preach to the dispersed Jews.

**Verse 23. *Ye are from beneath***— Ye are capable of murder, and of self-murder too, because ye have nothing of God in you. Ye are altogether earthly, sensual, and devilish. They verified this character in murdering the Lord Jesus; and many of them afterwards, to escape famine, etc., put an end to their own lives.

**Verse 25. *Who art thou?***— This marks the indignation of the Pharisees-as if they had said: Who art thou that takest upon thee to deal out threatenings in this manner against us?

***Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.***— Rather, Just what I have already told you, i.e. that I am the light of the world-the Christ-the Savior of mankind. There are a variety of renderings for this verse among the critics. Some consider **την αρχην** (which makes the principal difficulty in the text) as the answer of our Lord. Who art thou? I am **την αρχην**, the chief, the supreme; and have therefore a right to judge, and to execute judgment. But if our Lord had intended to convey this meaning, he would doubtless have said **η αρχη**, or **ο αρχων**, and not **την αρχην**, in the accusative case. This mode of reading appears to have been followed by the Vulgate, some copies of the Itala, and some of the fathers; but this construction can never be reconciled to the Greek text. Others take **την αρχην** as an adverb, in which sense it is repeatedly used by the best Greek writers; and, connecting the 25th with the 26th verse, they translate thus: I have indeed, as I ASSURE ye, many things to say of you, and to condemn in you. See Wakefield. Raphelius takes up the words nearly in the same way, and defends his mode of exposition with much critical learning; and to him I refer the reader. I have given it that meaning which I thought the most simple and plain, should

any departure from our own version be thought necessary: both convey a good and consistent sense.

**Verse 26. *I have many things to say and to judge of you***— Or, to speak and to condemn, etc. I could speedily expose all your iniquities—your pride and ambition, your hypocrisy and irreligion, your hatred to the light, and your malice against the truth, together with the present obstinate unbelief of your hearts, and show that these are the reasons why I say you will die in your sins; but these will appear in their true light: when, after you have crucified me, the judgments of God shall descend upon and consume you.

***He that sent me is true***— Whatever he hath spoken of you by the prophets shall surely come to pass; his word cannot fail.

**Verse 28. *When ye have lifted up***— When ye have crucified me, and thus filled up the measure of your iniquities, ye shall know that I am the Christ, by the signs that shall follow; and ye shall know that what I spoke is true, by the judgments that shall follow. To be lifted up, is a common mode of expression, among the Jewish writers, for to die, or to be killed.

**Verse 29. *The Father hath not left me alone***— Though ye shalt have power to put me to death, yet this shall not be because he hath abandoned me. No—he is ever with me, because I do that which pleaseth him; and it is his pleasure that I should lay down my life for the salvation of the world. Does not our Lord allude to the following scriptures?—Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; my ears hast thou opened: (or, a body hast thou prepared me: Hebrews 10:5:) then said I, Lo, I come: this is written in the volume of the book concerning me. I delight to do thy will, O my God! Thy law is in my heart. Psalm 40:6-8.

**Verse 30. *As he spake these words, many believed on him***.— The same sun that hardens the clay softens the wax. This discourse, which proved the savor of death unto death to the obstinate Pharisees, became the savor of life unto life to many of the simple-hearted people.

**Verse 31. *If ye continue in my word***— Or, in this doctrine of mine. It is not enough to receive God's truth—we must retain and walk in it. And it is only when we receive the truth, love it, keep it, and walk in it, that we are the genuine disciples of Christ.

**Verse 32. *Ye shall know the truth***— Shall have a constant experimental knowledge of its power and efficacy.

***And the truth shall make you free.***— It was a maxim of the Jews, “That no man was free, but he who exercised himself in the meditation of the law.” No man is truly free, but he in whose heart the power of sin is destroyed, and who has received the Spirit of adoption, through which he cries, Abba! Father! See Romans 8:15. The bondage of sin is the most grievous bondage; and freedom from its guilt and influence is the greatest liberty.

**Verse 33. *They answered***— That is, the other Jews who had not believed—the carping, cavilling Pharisees already mentioned; for the words cannot be spoken of the simple people who had already believed. See John 8:30.

***Were never in bondage to any man***— This assertion was not only false, but it was ridiculous in the extreme; seeing their whole history, sacred and profane, is full of recitals of their servitude in Egypt, in Chaldea, under the Persians, under the Macedonians, and under the Romans. But those who are not under the influence of the truth of God will speak and act according to the influence of the spirit of falsehood and error. If the words are to be restrained to themselves alone, they may be understood thus: We are Abraham’s seed: and we were never in bondage. Both these propositions had a faint shadow of truth.

**Verse 34. *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.***— Or, *δουλος* *εστι*, etc., is the slave of sin. This was the slavery of which Christ spoke; and deliverance from it, was the liberty which he promised.

**Verse 35. *And the servant abideth not in the house***— Or, rather, Now the slave abided not in the family. As if Jesus had said: And now that I am speaking of a slave, I will add one thing more, viz. a slave has no right to any part of the inheritance in the family to which he belongs; but the son, the legitimate son, has a right. He can make any servant of the family free, though no slave can. He can divide or bestow the inheritance as he pleases. Our Lord seems here to refer to the sending away of Ishmael, mentioned, Genesis 21:10-14. Only those who are genuine children can inherit the

estate. If sons, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: Galatians 4:21-31; Romans 8:17; and see Bishop Pearce's Paraphrase.

**Verse 37. *My word hath no place in you.***— Or, this doctrine of mine hath no place to you. Ye hear the truths of God, but ye do not heed them: the word of life has no influence over you; and how can it, when you seek to kill me because I proclaim this truth to you?

It is a dismal omen when a person is regardless of the truth of God: it is more so to be provoked against it: but to persecute and endeavor to destroy those who preach it is the last degree of perverseness and obduracy. The word of God requires a heart which is empty. A heart filled with earthly projects, carnal interests ambition, thoughts of raising a fortune, and with the love of the superfluities and pleasures of life, is not fit to receive the seed of the kingdom. When a man shuts his heart against it by his passions, he at the same time opens it to all sorts of crimes.

QUESNEL.

From what is here said, it is manifest, says Dr. Lightfoot, that the whole tendency of our Savior's discourse is to show the Jews, that they are the seed of that serpent which was to bruise the heel of the Messiah: else what could that mean, John 8:44: Ye are of your father the devil, i.e. ye are the seed of the serpent.

**Verse 38. *I speak that which I have seen***— I speak nothing but that unchangeable, eternal truth which I have received from the bosom of God.

***Ye do that which ye have seen***— Instead of *εωρακατε*, ye have seen, I think we should read *ηκουσατε*, ye have heard, on the authority of BCKL, fifteen others; Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian, later Syriac in the margin, Gothic, one copy of the Itala; Origen, Cyril, and Chrysostom. This reading, says Bishop Pearce, (who has adopted it,) seems preferable to the other, because it could not be said, with the same propriety, that the Jews had seen any thing with their father the devil, as it could that Jesus had seen with his.

Jesus saw the Father, for he was the WORD that was with God from eternity. The Jews did not see, they only felt and heard, their father the devil. It is the interest of Satan to keep himself out of sight, and to work in the dark.

**Verse 39. *If ye were Abraham's children***— Griesbach reads εστε, ye are, instead of ητε, ye were, on the authority of BDL, Vulgate, four copies of the Itala; Origen and Augustin.

***Ye would do the works of Abraham.***— As the son has the nature of his father in him, and naturally imitates him, so, if ye were the children of Abraham, ye would imitate him in his faith, obedience, and uprightness; but this ye do not, for ye seek to kill me—ye are watching for an opportunity to destroy me, merely because I tell you the truth: Abraham never did any thing like this; therefore, you have no spiritual relationship to him.

**Verse 41. *Ye do the deeds of your father.***— You have certainly another father than Abraham—one who has instilled his own malignant nature into you; and, as ye seek to murder me for telling you the truth, ye must be the offspring of him who was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, John 8:44.

***We be not born of fornication***— We are not a mixed, spurious breed—our tribes and families have been kept distinct—we are descended from Abraham by his legal wife Sarah; and we are no idolaters.

***We have one Father, even God.***— In the spiritual sense of father and son, we are not a spurious, that is, an idolatrous race; because we acknowledge none as our spiritual father, and worship none as such, but the true God. See Bishop Pearce.

**Verse 42. *If God were your Father, ye would love me***— I came from God, and it would be absurd to suppose that you would persecute me if you were under the influence of God. The children of the same father should not murder each other.

**Verse 43. *Why do ye not understand my speech?***— την λαλιαν την εμην, This my mode of speaking—when illustrating spiritual by natural things: λαλια refers to the manner of speaking; λογος, to the matter or subject on which he spoke. For λαλιαν, the Codex Bezae had originally αληθειαν: why do ye not acknowledge this TRUTH of mine? A few other MSS. agree in this reading.

***Because ye cannot hear my word.***— That is, ye cannot bear my doctrine: it comes too close to you; it searches your hearts, detects your hypocrisy, and exposes your iniquitous intentions and designs; and as ye are determined not to leave your sins, so ye are purposed not to hear my doctrine.

**Verse 44. *Ye are of your father the devil***— Ye are the seed of the old serpent. See on John 8:37.

***The lusts of your father***— Like father like son. What Satan desires, ye desire; because ye are filled with his nature. Awful state of unregenerate men! They have the nearest alliance to Satan; they partake of his nature and have in them the same principles and propensities which characterize the very nature and essence of the devil! Reader, canst thou rest in this state? Apply to God, through Christ, that thou mayest be born again.

***He was a murderer from the beginning***— It was through him that Adam transgressed; in consequence of which death entered into the world, and slew him and all his posterity. This was the sentiment of the Jews themselves. In Sohar Kadash, the wicked are called, “The children of the old serpent, who slew Adam and all his descendants.” See Schoettgen.

***Abode not in the truth***— He stood not in the truth—was once in a state of glorious felicity, but fell from it; and, being deprived of all good himself, he could not endure that others should enjoy any; therefore by his lies he deceived Eve, and brought her, her husband, and, through them, their posterity, into his own condemnation.

***He speaketh of his own***— *εκ των ιδιων λαλει*, He speaketh of his own offspring, or, from his own disposition, for he is the father and fountain of all error and falsity; and all who are deceived by him, and partake of his disposition, falsity and cruelty, are his offspring, for he is a liar, and the father of it—*και ο πατηρ αυτου*—literally, his father also. There is considerable difficulty in this verse. The Cainites, and the Archontites, mentioned by Epiphanius, read it thus: “Ye are the children of your father the devil, because he is a liar, and his father was a liar. He was a man-slayer, and he did not remain in the truth. When he speaketh, he speaketh a lie of his own, (progenitors understood,) because his father also was a liar.” The consequences which the above heretics drew from this



verse were the following. They said that the father of the Jews was a demon; that he also had a demon for his father; and that he had a demon for his father, etc. The Archontites maintained that Cain had a demon for his father, the spirit which our Lord speaks of here; and that the Jews proceeded from the race of Cain.

Grotius, supposing that the devil who tempted Eve was not the prince of devils, but rather a subordinate one, seems to think he may be understood here, he is a liar, and his father also, which is the literal translation of the latter clause of the text, *ως και ο πατηρ αυτου*, as it has been read by many of the primitive fathers.

Mr. Wakefield, by changing *το*, before *ψευδος*, into *τις*, gives the text the following translation:—"The devil is your father, and ye willingly perform the lusts of your father. He was a man-slayer from the first, and continued not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When ANY ONE speaketh a lie, he speaketh according to his own kindred: for his father also is a liar." Our own translation, that refers *πατηρ αυτου* to *ψευδος*, a lie, and not to *ψευστης*, a liar, is probably the most correct.

**Verse 46.** *Which of you convinceth me of sin?*— Do you pretend to reject the truths which I announce, because my life does not correspond to the doctrines I have taught? But can any of you prove me guilty of any fault? You have maliciously watched all my steps; have you seen the smallest matter to reprove, in any part of my conduct?

But it is probable that *αμαρτια*, sin, is put here in opposition to *αληθεια*, truth, in the same verse, and then it should be rendered falsehood. The very best Greek writers use the word in the same sense: this, *ΚΥΡΚΕ* proves by quotations from Polybius, Lucian, Dionysius Halicarnassensis, Plutarch, Thucydides, and Hippocrates. *RAPHELIUS* adds a pertinent quotation from Herodotus, and shows that the purest Latin writers have used the word peccatum, sin, in the sense of error or falsehood. See the note on Genesis 13:13.

**Verse 47.** *He that is of God*— Meaning probably himself: he who came from God, or was born of God—heareth the words of God—has the constant inspiration of his Spirit, speaks nothing but truth, and cannot possibly err.

**Verse 48. *Thou art a Samaritan***— This was the same, among them, as heretic, or schismatic, among us. This is the only time in which the Jews gave our Lord this title of reproach; and they probably grounded it on his having preached among them, and lodged in their villages. See the account in John 4:39, 40; but Samaritan, among them, meant a person unworthy of any credit.

***Hast a devil?***— Art possessed by an evil spirit; and art, in consequence, deranged.

**Verse 49. *I have not a devil***— The first part of the charge was too futile: if taken literally, it was both absurd and impossible; they did not believe it themselves, and therefore our Lord does not stop a moment to refute it; but he answers to the second with the utmost meekness and conclusiveness: I honor God. This is what no demon can do, nor any man who is under such influence.

**Verse 50. *I seek not mine own glory***— Another proof that I am not influenced by any spirit but that which proceeds from God. But there is one that seeketh-i.e. my glory-and judgeth-will punish you for your determined obstinacy and iniquity.

**Verse 51. *Shall never see death***.— As Moses promised a long life, with abundance of temporal blessings, to those who should keep his statutes and ordinances, so he who keeps my doctrine shall not only have a long life, but shall never see death-he shall never come under the power of the death of the soul, but shall live eternally with me in glory.

**Verse 54. *Your God***— Many MSS. and most of the versions read **ημων**, our, instead of **υμων**. The variation is of very little consequence. They called God their God, while enemies to him both in their spirit and conduct.

**Verse 56. *Abraham rejoiced to see my day***— Or, he earnestly desired to see my day; **ηγαλλιασατο**, from **αγαν**, very much, and **αλλομαι**, I leap-his soul leaped forward in earnest hope and strong expectation that he might see the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The metaphor appears to be taken from a person who, desiring to see a long-expected friend who is coming, runs forward, now and then jumping up to see if he can discover him. There is a saying very like this in Sohar Numer fol. 61: “Abraham

rejoiced because he could know, and perceive, and cleave to the Divine NAME.” The Divine name is יהוה Jehovah; and by this they simply mean God himself.

**And he saw it**— Not only in the first promise, Genesis 3:15, for the other patriarchs saw this as well as he; and not only in that promise which was made particularly to himself, Genesis 12:7; 22:18, (compared with Galatians 3:16,) that the Messiah should spring from his family; but he saw this day especially when Jehovah appeared to him in a human form, Genesis 18:2, 17, which many suppose to have been a manifestation of the Lord Jesus.

**Verse 57. *Thou art not yet fifty years old***— Some MSS. read forty. The age of our blessed Lord has never been properly determined. Some of the primitive fathers believed that he was fifty years old when he was crucified; but their foundation, which is no other than these words of the Jews, is but a very uncertain one. Calmet thinks that our Lord was at this time about thirty-four years and ten months old, and that he was crucified about the middle of his thirty-sixth year; and asserts that the vulgar era is three years too late. On the other hand, some allow him to have been but thirty-one years old, and that his ministry had lasted but one year. Many opinions on this subject, which are scarcely worthy of being copied, may be found in Calmet.

**Verse 58. *Before Abraham was, I am.***— The following is a literal translation of Calmet’s note on this passage:—”I am from all eternity. I have existed before all ages. You consider in me only the person who speaks to you, and who has appeared to you within a particular time. But besides this human nature, which ye think ye know, there is in me a Divine and eternal nature. Both, united, subsist together in my person. Abraham knew how to distinguish them. He adored me as his God; and desired me as his Savior. He has seen me in my eternity, and he predicted my coming into the world.”

On the same verse Bishop Pearce speaks as follows:—”What Jesus here says relates (I think) to his existence antecedent to Abraham’s days, and not to his having been the Christ appointed and foretold before that time; for, if Jesus had meant this, the answer I apprehend would not have been a pertinent one. He might have been appointed and foretold for the Christ;

but if he had not had an existence before Abraham's days, neither could he have seen Abraham, (as, according to our English translation, the Jews suppose him to have said,) nor could Abraham have seen him, as I suppose the Jews understood him to have said in the preceding verse, to which words of the Jews the words of Jesus here are intended as an answer."

**Verse 59. *Then took they up stones*,** etc.— It appears that the Jews understood him as asserting his Godhead; and, supposing him to be a blasphemer, they proceeded to stone him, according to the law. Leviticus 24:16.

***But Jesus hid himself***— In all probability he rendered himself invisible—though some will have it that he conveyed himself away from those Jews who were his enemies, by mixing himself with the many who believed on him, (John 8:30, 31,) and who, we may suppose, favored his escape. Pearce.

But where did they find the stones, Christ and they being in the temple? It is answered: 1st. It is probable, as the buildings of the temple had not been yet completed, there might have been many stones near the place; or, 2dly. They might have gone out so the outer courts for them; and, before their return, our Lord had escaped. See Lightfoot and Calmet.

***Going through the midst of them, and so passed by.***— These words are wanting in the Codex Bezae, and in several editions and versions. Erasmus, Grotius, Beza, Pearce, and Griesbach, think them not genuine. The latter has left them out of the text. But, notwithstanding what these critics have said, the words seem necessary to explain the manner of our Lord's escape. 1st. He hid himself, by becoming invisible; and then, 2dly. He passed through the midst of them, and thus got clear away from the place. See a similar escape mentioned, Luke 4:30, and the note there.

THE subjects of this chapter are both uncommon and of vast importance.

1. The case of the woman taken in adultery, when properly and candidly considered, is both intelligible and edifying. It is likely that the accusation was well founded; and that the scribes and Pharisees endeavored maliciously to serve themselves of the fact, to embroil our Lord with the civil power, or ruin his moral reputation. Our Lord was no magistrate, and

therefore could not, with any propriety, give judgment in the case; had he done it, it must have been considered an invasion of the rights and office of the civil magistrate, and would have afforded them ground for a process against him. On the other hand, had he acquitted the woman, he might have been considered, not only as setting aside the law of Moses, but as being indulgent to a crime of great moral turpitude, and the report of this must have ruined his moral character. He disappointed this malice by refusing to enter into the case; and overwhelmed his adversaries with confusion, by unmasking their hearts, and pointing out their private abominations. It is generally supposed that our Lord acquitted the woman: this is incorrect; he neither acquitted nor condemned her: he did not enter at all juridically into the business. His saying, Neither do I condemn thee, was no more than a simple declaration that he would not concern himself with the matter-that being the office of the chief magistrate; but, as a preacher of righteousness, he exhorted her to abandon her evil practices, lest the punishment, which she was now likely to escape, should be inflicted on her for a repetition of her transgression.

2. In several places in this chapter, our Lord shows his intimate union with the Father, both in will, doctrine, and deed; and though he never speaks so as to confound the persons, yet he evidently shows that such was the indivisible unity, subsisting between the Father and the Son, that what the one witnessed, the other witnessed; what the one did, the other did; and that he who saw the one necessarily saw the other.

3. The original state of Satan is here pointed out-he abode not in the truth, John 8:44. Therefore he was once in the truth, in righteousness and true holiness-and he fell from that truth into sin and falsehood, so that he became the father of lies and the first murderer. Our Lord confirms here the Mosaic account of the fall of man, and shows that this fall was brought about by his lies, and that these lies issued in the murder or destruction both of the body and soul of man.

4. The patience and meekness exercised by our Lord, towards his most fell and unrelenting enemies, are worthy the especial regard of all those who are persecuted for righteousness.-When he was reviled, he reviled not again. As the searcher of hearts, he simply declared their state, John 8:44, in order to their conviction and conversion: not to have done so, would

have been to betray their souls. In this part of his conduct we find two grand virtues united, which are rarely associated in man, MEEKNESS and FIDELITY-patience to bear all insults and personal injuries; and boldness, in the face of persecution and death, to declare the truth. The meek man generally leaves the sinner unreprieved: the bold and zealous man often betrays a want of due self-management, and reproves sin in a spirit which prevents the reproof from reaching the heart. In this respect also, our blessed Lord has left us an example, that we should follow his steps. Let him that readeth understand.

## CHAPTER 9.

Account of the man who was born blind, 1-5. Christ heals him, 6, 7. The man is questioned by his neighbors, 8-12. He is brought to the Pharisees, who question him, 13-17, and then his parents, 18-23. They again interrogate the man, who, vindicating the conduct of Christ, is excommunicated by them, 24-34. Jesus, hearing of the conduct of the Pharisees, afterwards finds the man, and reveals himself to him, 35-38. He passes sentence on the obduracy and blindness of the Pharisees, 39-41.

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9.

**Verse 1. *And as Jesus passed by***— This chapter is a continuation of the preceding, and therefore the word Jesus is not in the Greek text: it begins simply thus—And passing along, *καὶ παραγῶν*, etc. Having left the temple, where the Jews were going to stone him, (John 8:59,) it is probable our Lord went, according to his custom, to the mount of Olives. The next day, which was the Sabbath, John 9:14, he met a man who had been born blind, sitting in some public place, and asking alms from those who passed by, John 9:8.

**Verse 2. *Who did sin, this man, or his parents***— The doctrine of the transmigration of souls appears to have been an article in the creed of the Pharisees, and it was pretty general both among the Greeks and the Asiatics. The Pythagoreans believed the souls of men were sent into other bodies for the punishment of some sin which they had committed in a pre-existent state. This seems to have been the foundation of the disciples question to our Lord. Did this man sin in a pre-existent state, that he is punished in this body with blindness? Or, did his parents commit some sin, for which they are thus plagued in their offspring?

Most of the Asiatic nations have believed in the doctrine of transmigration. The Hindoos still hold it; and profess to tell precisely the sin which the person committed in another body, by the afflictions which he endures in this: they profess also to tell the cures for these. For instance, they say the headache is a punishment for having, in a former state, spoken irreverently

to father or mother. Madness is a punishment for having been disobedient to father or mother, or to one's spiritual guide. The epilepsy is a punishment for having, in a former state, administered poison to any one at the command of his master. Pain in the eyes is a punishment for having, in another body, coveted another man's wife. Blindness is a punishment for having killed his mother: but this person they say, before his new birth, will suffer many years' torment in hell. See many curious particulars relative to this in the *AYEEN AKBERY*, vol. iii. p. 168-175; and in the *Institutes of Menu*, chap. xi. Inst. 48-53.

The Jewish rabbins have had the same belief from the very remotest antiquity. Origen cites an apocryphal book of the Hebrews, in which the patriarch Jacob is made to speak thus: I am an angel of God; one of the first order of spirits. Men call me Jacob, but my true name, which God has given me, is Israel: Orat. Joseph. apud ORIG. Many of the Jewish doctors have believed that the souls of Adam, Abraham, and Phineas, have successively animated the great men of their nation. Philo says that the air is full of spirits, and that some, through their natural propensity, join themselves to bodies; and that others have an aversion from such a union. See several other things relative to this point in his treatises, *Deuteronomy Plant. Noe-De Gigantibus-De Confus. Ling.-De Somniis*, etc.; and see Calmet, where he is pretty largely quoted.

The Hindoos believe that the most of their misfortunes arise out of the sins of a former birth; and, in moments of grief not unfrequently break out into exclamations like the following:—"Ah! in a former birth how many sins must I have committed, that I am thus afflicted!" "I am now suffering for the sins of a former birth; and the sins that I am now committing are to fill me with misery in a following birth. There is no end to my sufferings!"

Josephus, *Ant. b. xvii. c. 1, s. 3*, and *War, b. ii. c. 8, s. 14*, gives an account of the doctrine of the Pharisees on this subject. He intimates that the souls of those only who were pious were permitted to reanimate human bodies, and this was rather by way of reward than punishment; and that the souls of the vicious are put into eternal prisons, where they are continually tormented, and out of which they can never escape. But it is very likely that Josephus has not told the whole truth here; and that the doctrine of the Pharisees on this subject was nearly the same with that of the Papists



on purgatory. Those who are very wicked go irrecoverably to hell; but those who are not so have the privilege of expiating their venial sins in purgatory. Thus, probably, is the Pharisean doctrine of the transmigration to be understood. Those who were comparatively pious went into other bodies, for the expiation of any remaining guilt which had not been removed previously to a sudden or premature death, after which they were fully prepared for paradise; but others who had been incorrigibly wicked were sent at once into hell, without ever being offered the privilege of amendment, or escape. For the reasons which may be collected above, much as I reverence Bishop Pearce, I cannot agree with his note on this passage, where he says that the words of the disciples should be thus understood:-Who did sin? This man, that he is blind? or his parents, that he was born so? He thinks it probable that the disciples did not know that the man was born blind: if he was, then it was for some sin of his parents-if he was not born so, then this blindness came unto him as a punishment for some crime of his own. It may be just necessary to say, that some of the rabbins believed that it was possible for an infant to sin in the womb, and to be punished with some bodily infirmity in consequence. See several examples in Lightfoot on this place.

**Verse 3. *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents***— That is, the blindness of this person is not occasioned by any sin of his own, nor of his parents, but has happened in the ordinary course of Divine providence, and shall now become the instrument of salvation to his soul, edification to others, and glory to GOD. Many of the Jews thought that marks on the body were proofs of sin in the soul. From a like persuasion, probably arose that proverb among our northern neighbors-Mark him whom God marks.

**Verse 4. *While it is day***— Though I plainly perceive that the cure of this man will draw down upon me the malice of the Jewish rulers, yet I must accomplish the work for which I came into the world while it is day-while the term of this life of mine shall last. It was about six months after this that our Lord was crucified. It is very likely that the day was now declining, and night coming on; and he took occasion from this circumstance to introduce the elegant metaphor immediately following. By this we are taught that no opportunity for doing good should be

omitted-DAY representing the opportunity: NIGHT, the loss of that opportunity.

**Verse 5. *I am the light of the world.***— Like the sun, it is my business to dispense light and heat every where; and to neglect no opportunity that may offer to enlighten and save the bodies and souls of men. See John 8:12.

**Verse 6. *Anointed the eyes of the blind man***— It would be difficult to find out the reason which induced our Lord to act thus. It is certain, this procedure can never be supposed to have been any likely medical means to restore sight to a man who was born blind; this action, therefore, had no tendency to assist the miracle. If his eye-lids had been only so gummed together that they needed nothing but to be suppled and well washed, it is not likely that this could possibly have been omitted from his birth until now. The Jews believed that there was some virtue in spittle to cure the diseases of the eye; but then they always accompanied this with some charm. Our Lord might make clay with the spittle to show that no charms or spells were used, and to draw their attention more particularly to the miracle which he was about to work. Perhaps the best lesson we can learn from this is: That God will do his own work in his own way; and, to hide pride from man, will often accomplish the most beneficial ends by means not only simple or despicable in themselves, but by such also as appear entirely contrary, in their nature and operation, to the end proposed to be effected by them.

**Verse 7. *Siloam***— Called also Shiloah, Silos, or Siloa, was a fountain under the walls of Jerusalem, towards the east, between the city and the brook Kidron. Calmet thinks that this was the same with En-rogel, or the fuller's fountain, which is mentioned in Joshua 15:7; 18:16; in 2 Samuel 17:17; and in 1 Kings 1:9. Its waters were collected in a great reservoir for the use of the city; and a stream from it supplied the pool of Bethesda.

***By interpretation, SENT.***— From the Hebrew שֵׁלַח shalach, he sent: either because it was looked upon as a gift sent from God, for the use of the city; or because its waters were directed or sent by canals or pipes, into different quarters, for the same purpose. Some think there is an allusion here to Genesis 49:10; that this fountain was a type of Shiloh, the Christ, the SENT of God; and that it was to direct the man's mind to the

accomplishment of the above prophecy that our Lord sent him to this fountain. This supposition does not appear very solid. The Turks have this fountain still in great veneration, and think the waters of it are good for diseases of the eyes. Lightfoot says that the spring of Siloam discharged itself by a double stream into a twofold pool—the upper was called שִׁלּוּחַ shiloach—the lower, שֶׁלַח shelach; the one signifying ἀπεσταλμενος, sent, the latter, κωδιων fleeces; and that our Lord marked this point so particularly, to inform the blind man that it was not to Shelach, but to Shiloach, that he must go to wash his eyes. These two pools seem to be referred to in Isaiah 7:23; 22:9.

**Verse 8. *That he was blind***— ὅτι τυφλος ην: but, instead of this, προσαιτης, when he begged, or was a beggar, is the reading of ABC\*DKL, seven others, both the Syriac, both the Arabic, later Persic, Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian, Sahidic, Gothic, Slavonic, Vulgate, eight copies of the Itala, and some of the primitive fathers. This is in all probability the true reading, and is received by Griesbach into the text.

Beggars in all countries have a language peculiar to themselves. The language of the Jewish beggars was the following: כִּי זָבִי כִי Deserve something by me—Give me something that God may reward you. גַּר מֶךְ גַּר מֶךְ כִּי זָבִי כִי O ye tender-hearted, do yourselves good by me. Another form, which seems to have been used by such as had formerly been in better circumstances, was this: כִּי כִי מָה הוּיָא אֲתִכְלֵ בִי מָה אָנָא Look back and see what I have been; look upon me now, and see what I am. See Lightfoot.

**Verse 9. *Some said, This is he***— This miracle was not wrought in private—nor before a few persons—nor was it lightly credited. Those who knew him before were divided in their opinion concerning him: not whether the man who sat there begging was blind before—for this was known to all; nor, whether the person now before them saw clearly—for this was now notorious; but whether this was the person who was born blind, and who used in a particular place to sit begging.

***Others said, He is like him***— This was very natural: for certainly the restoration of his sight must have given him a very different appearance to what he had before.

**Verse 11. *A man that is called Jesus***— The whole of this relation is simple and artless in the highest degree. The blind man had never seen Jesus, but he had heard of his name—he felt that he had put something on his eyes, which he afterwards found to be clay—but how this was made he could not tell, because he could not see Jesus when he did it; therefore he does not say, he made clay of spittle—but simply, he made clay, and spread it upon my eyes. Where a multitude of incidents must necessarily come into review, imposture and falsehood generally commit themselves, as it is termed; but, however numerous the circumstances may be in a relation of fact, simple truth is never embarrassed.

**Verse 12. *Where is he?***— They had designed to seize and deliver him up to the Sanhedrin, as a violator of the law, because he had done this on the Sabbath day.

**Verse 13. *They brought to the Pharisees***— These had the chief rule, and determined all controversies among the people; in every case of religion, their judgment was final: the people, now fully convinced that the man had been cured, brought him to the Pharisees, that they might determine how this was done, and whether it had been done legally.

**Verse 14. *It was the Sabbath***— Some of the ancient rabbins taught, and they have been followed by some moderns, not much better skilled in physic than themselves, that the saliva is a cure for several disorders of the eyes; but the former held this to be contrary to the law, if applied on the Sabbath. See LIGHTFOOT'S Hor. Talm.

**Verse 16. *This man is not of God***— He can neither be the Messiah, nor a prophet, for he has broken the Sabbath. The Jews always argued falsely on this principle. The law relative to the observation of the Sabbath never forbade any work but what was of the servile and unnecessary kind. Works of necessity and mercy never could be forbidden on that day by him whose name is mercy, and whose nature is love; for the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; were it otherwise, the Sabbath would be rather a curse than a blessing.

***How can a man that is a sinner***, etc.— They knew very well that though magicians and impostors might do things apparently miraculous, yet nothing really good could be performed by them. We might have safely

defied all the magicians in Egypt, who are said to have been so successful in imitating some of the miracles of Moses, to have opened the eyes of one blind man, or to have done any essential good either to the body or to the soul.

*And there was a division among them.*— σχισμα, a schism, a decided difference of opinion, which caused a separation of the assembly.

**Verse 17. *He is a prophet.***— They had intended to lay snares for the poor man, that, getting him to acknowledge Christ for the Messiah, they might put him out of the synagogue, John 9:22, or put him to death, that such a witness to the Divine power of Christ might not appear against them. But, as the mercy of God had given him his sight, so the wisdom of God taught him how to escape the snares laid for his ruin. On all thy glory there shall be a defense, says the prophet, Isaiah 4:5. When God gives any particular mercy or grace, he sends power to preserve it, and wisdom to improve it. The man said, He is a prophet. Now, according to a Jewish maxim, a prophet might dispense with the observation of the Sabbath. See Grotius. If they allow that Jesus was a prophet, then, even in their sense, he might break the law of the Sabbath, and be guiltless: or, if they did not allow him to be a prophet, they must account for the miracle some other way than by the power of God; as from Satan or his agents no good can proceed—to do this it was impossible. So the wisdom of God taught the poor man to give them such an answer as put them into a complete dilemma, from which they could not possibly extricate themselves.

**Verse 18. *But the Jews did not believe***— All the subterfuge they could use was simply to sin against their conscience, by asserting that the man had not been blind; but out of this subterfuge they were soon driven by the testimony of the parents, who, if tried farther on this subject, might have produced as witness, not only the whole neighborhood, but nearly the whole city: for it appears the man got his bread by publicly begging, John 9:8.

*That he had been blind, and received his sight*— This clause is omitted in some MSS., probably because similar words occur immediately after. There is, however, no evidence against it, sufficient to exclude it from the text.

**Verse 21. *He is of age***— ἡλικίαν εχει, literally, he has stature, i.e. he is a full-grown man; and in this sense the phrase is used by the best Greek writers. See Kypke and Raphelius. Mature age was fixed among the Jews at thirty years.

**Verse 22. *Put out of the synagogue***.— That is, excommunicated-separated from all religious connection with those who worshipped God. This was the lesser kind of excommunication among the Jews and was termed nidui. The cherem, or anathema, was not used against the followers of Christ till after the resurrection.

**Verse 24. *Give God the praise***— Having called the man a second time, they proceeded to deal with him in the most solemn manner; and therefore they put him to his oath; for the words above were the form of an oath, proposed by the chief magistrate to those who were to give evidence to any particular fact, or to attest any thing, as produced by or belonging to the Lord. See Joshua 7:19; 1 Samuel 6:5, and Luke 17:18. But, while they solemnly put him to his oath, they endeavored to put their own words in his mouth, viz. he is a sinner—a pretender to the prophetic character, and a transgressor of the law of God:—assert this, or you will not please us.

**Verse 25. *Whereas I was blind, now I see***.— He pays no attention to their cavils, nor to their perversion of justice; but, in the simplicity of his heart, speaks to the fact, of the reality of which he was ready to give them the most substantial evidence.

**Verse 27. *I have told you already***— So he did, John 9:15. And did ye not hear? Ye certainly did. Why then do you wish to hear it again? Is it because ye wish to become his disciples? The poor man continued steady in his testimony; and, by putting this question to them, he knew he should soon put an end to the debate.

**Verse 28. *Then they reviled him***— ελοιδορησαν. Eustathius derives λoidορια from λογος, a word, and δορυ, a spear:—they spoke cutting, piercing words. Solomon talks of some who spoke like the piercings of a sword, Proverbs 12:18. And the psalmist speaks of words that are like drawn swords, Psalm 55:21, words which show that the person who speaks them has his heart full of murderous intentions; and that, if he had

the same power with a sword as he has with his tongue, he would destroy him whom he thus reproaches.

*We are Moses' disciples.*— By this they meant that they were genuine Pharisees; for they did not allow the Sadducees to be disciples of Moses.

**Verse 29.** *We know not from whence he is.*— As if they had said: We have the fullest assurance that the commission of Moses was Divine; but we have no proof that this man has such a commission: and should we leave Moses, and attach ourselves to this stranger? No.

**Verse 30.** *Why herein is a marvellous thing*— As if he had said, This is wonderful indeed! Is it possible that such persons as you are, whose business it is to distinguish good from evil, and who pretend to know a true from a false prophet, cannot decide in a case so plain? Has not the man opened my eyes? Is not the miracle known to all the town; and could any one do it who was not endued with the power of God?

**Verse 31.** *God heareth not sinners*— I believe the word *αμαρτωλων* signifies heathens, or persons not proselyted to the Jewish religion; and therefore it is put in opposition to *θεοσεβης*, a worshipper of the true God. See the note on Luke 7:37. But in what sense may it be said, following our common version, that God heareth not sinners? When they regard iniquity in their heart-when they wish to be saved, and yet abide in their sins-when they will not separate themselves from the workers and works of iniquity. In all these cases, God heareth not sinners.

**Verse 32.** *Since the world began*— *εκ του αιωνος*, From the age-probably meaning from the commencement of time. Neither Moses nor the prophets have ever opened the eyes of a man who was born blind: if this person then were not the best of beings, would God grant him a privilege which he has hitherto denied to his choicest favorites?

*Opened the eyes of one that was born blind.*— It will readily appear that our Lord performed no surgical operation in this cure: the man was born blind, and he was restored to sight by the power of God; the simple means used could have had no effect in the cure; the miracle is therefore complete. That there are cases, in which a person who was born blind may be restored to sight by surgical means, we know: but no such means were used by Christ: and it is worthy of remark that, from the foundation of the

world, no person born blind has been restored to sight, even by surgical operation, till about the year of our Lord, 1728; when the celebrated Dr. Cheselden, by couching the eyes of a young man, 14 years of age, who had been born blind, restored him to perfect soundness. This was the effect of well directed surgery: that performed by Christ was a miracle.

**Verse 33.** *If this man were not of God*, etc.— A very just conclusion: God is the fountain of all good: all good must proceed from him, and no good can be done but through him; if this person were not commissioned by the good God, he could not perform such beneficent miracles as these.

**Verse 34.** *Thou wast altogether born in sins*— Thou hast not only been a vile wretch in some other pre-existent state, but thy parents also have been grossly iniquitous; therefore thou and they are punished by this blindness: Thou wast altogether born in sins—thou art no other than a sinful lump of deformity, and utterly unfit to have any connection with those who worship God.

*And they cast him out.*— They immediately excommunicated him, as the margin properly reads—drove him from their assembly with disdain, and forbade his farther appearing in the worship of God. Thus a simple man, guided by the Spirit of truth, and continuing steady in his testimony, utterly confounded the most eminent Jewish doctors. When they had no longer either reason or argument to oppose to him, as a proof of their discomfiture and a monument of their reproach and shame, they had recourse to the secular arm, and thus silenced by political power a person whom they had neither reason nor religion to withstand. They had since many followers in their crimes. A false religion, supported by the state, has, by fire and sword silenced those whose truth in the end annihilated the system of their opponents.

**Verse 35.** *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*— This was the same with, Dost thou believe on the Messiah? for these two characters were inseparable; see John 1:34, 49; 10:36; Matthew 16:16; Mark 1:1.

**Verse 36.** *Who is he, Lord?*— it is very likely that the blind man did not know that it was Jesus the Christ who now spoke to him; for it is evident he had never seen him before this time; and he might now see him without



knowing that he was the person by whom he was cured, till our Lord made that discovery of himself, mentioned in the following verse.

**Verse 38. *And he said, Lord, I believe.***— That is, I believe thou art the Messiah; and, to give the fullest proof of the sincerity of his faith, he fell down before and adored him. Never having seen Jesus before, but simply knowing that a person of that name had opened his eyes, he had only considered him as a holy man and a prophet; but now that he sees and hears him he is convinced of his divinity, and glorifies him as his Savior. We may hear much of Jesus, but can never know his glories and excellencies till he has discovered himself to our hearts by his own Spirit; then we believe on him, trust him with our souls, and trust in him for our salvation. The word **κυριε** has two meanings: it signifies Lord, or Sovereign Ruler, and Sir, a title of civil respect. In the latter sense it seems evidently used in the 36th verse, {John 9:36} because the poor man did not then know that Jesus was the Messiah; in the former sense it is used in this verse—now the healed man knew the quality of his benefactor.

**Verse 39. *For judgment I am come***— I am come to manifest and execute the just judgment of God: 1. By giving sight to the blind, and light to the Gentiles who sit in darkness. 2. By removing the true light from those who, pretending to make a proper use of it, only abuse the mercy of God. In a word, salvation shall be taken away from the Jews, because they reject it; and the kingdom of God shall be given to the Gentiles.

**Verse 40. *Are we blind also?***— These Pharisees understood Christ as speaking of blindness in a spiritual sense, and wished to know if he considered them in that state.

**Verse 41. *If ye were blind***— If ye had not had sufficient opportunities to have acquainted yourselves with my Divine nature, by the unparalleled miracles which I have wrought before you? and the holy doctrine which I have preached, then your rejecting me could not be imputed to you as sin; but because ye say, we see—we are perfectly capable of judging between a true and false prophet, and can from the Scriptures point out the Messiah by his works—on this account you are guilty, and your sin is of no common nature, it remaineth, i.e. it shall not be expiated: as ye have rejected the Lord from being your deliverer, so the Lord has rejected you from being his people. When the Scripture speaks of sin remaining, it is always put in

opposition to pardon; for pardon is termed the taking away of sin, John 1:29; Psalm 32:5. And this is the proper import of the phrase, **αφεσις των αμαρτιωδς**, which occurs so frequently in the sacred writings.

1. THE history of the man who was born blind and cured by our Lord is, in every point of view, instructive. His simplicity, his courage, his constancy, and his gratitude are all so many subjects worthy of attention and emulation. He certainly confessed the truth at the most imminent risk of his life; and therefore, as Stephen was the first martyr for Christianity, this man was the first confessor. The power and influence of TRUTH, in supporting its friends and confounding its adversaries, are well exemplified in him; and not less so, that providence of God by which he was preserved from the malice of these bad men. The whole story is related with inimitable simplicity, and cannot be read by the most cold-hearted without extorting the exclamation, How forcible are right words?

2. It has already been remarked that, since the world began, there is no evidence that any man born blind was ever restored to sight by surgical means, till the days of Mr. Cheselden, who was a celebrated surgeon at St. Thomas's Hospital, London. For though, even before the Christian aera, there is reason to believe that both the Greek and Roman physicians performed operations to remove blindness occasioned by the cataract, yet we know of none of these ever attempted on the eyes of those who had been born blind, much less of any such persons being restored to sight. The cure before us must have been wholly miraculous-no appropriate means were used to effect it. What was done had rather a tendency to prevent and destroy sight than to help or restore it. The blindness in question was probably occasioned by a morbid structure of the organs of sight; and our Lord, by his sovereign power, instantaneously restored them to perfect soundness, without the intervention of any healing process. In this case there could be neither deception nor collusion.

## CHAPTER 10.

*Christ speaks the parable of the sheepfold, 1-6. Proclaims himself the door of the sheepfold, 7-10, and the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, 11-18. The Jews are again divided, and some revile and some vindicate our Lord, 19-21. His discourse with the Jews at the temple, on the feast of dedication, 22-29. Having asserted that he was one with the Father, the Jews attempt to stone him, 30, 31. He vindicates his conduct, and appeals to his works, 32-38. They strive to apprehend him; he escapes, and retires beyond Jordan, 39, 40. Many resort to and believe on him there, 41, 42.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10.

**Verse 1.** *Verily, verily*, etc.— From John 10:6, we learn that this is a parable, i.e. a representation of heavenly things through the medium of earthly things. Some think our Lord delivered this discourse immediately after that mentioned in the preceding chapter; others think it was spoken not less than three months after. The former, says Bishop Pearce, was spoken at the feast of tabernacles, see chap. 7, or about the end of September, and this at the feast of dedication, or in December. See John 10:22.

Christ, says Calmet, having declared himself to be the light of the world, which should blind some while it illuminated others, John 9:41, continues his discourse, and, under the similitude of a shepherd and his flock, shows that he was about to form his Church of Jews and Gentiles, and that into it he would admit none but those who heard his voice. The unbelieving and presumptuous Jews, who despised his doctrine, are the sheep which hear not the voice of the shepherd: the proud and self-sufficient Pharisees are those who imagine they see clearly while they are blind. The blind who become illuminated are the Gentiles and Jews who turn from their sins and believe in Jesus.

The light of the world, the good shepherd, and the door which leads into the sheepfold, are all to be understood as meaning Jesus Christ; the hireling

shepherds, the willfully blind; the murderers and robbers are the false Christs, false prophets, scribes, Pharisees, wicked hireling priests, and ungodly ministers of all sorts, whether among primitive Jews or modern Christians.

Our Lord introduces this discourse in a most solemn manner, Verily, verily!-Amen, amen!-it is true, it is true!-a Hebraism for, This is a most important and interesting truth; a truth of the utmost concern to mankind. At all times our Lord speaks what is infallibly true; but when he delivers any truths with this particular asseveration, it is either, 1. Because they are of greater importance; or, 2. because the mind of man is more averse from them; or, 3. because the small number of those who will practice them may render them incredible. Quesnel.

***He that entereth not by the door***— Christ assures us, John 10:7, that he is the door; whoever, therefore, enters not by Jesus Christ into the pastoral office, is no other than a thief and a robber in the sheepfold. And he enters not by Jesus Christ who enters with a prospect of any other interest besides that of Christ and his people. Ambition, avarice, love of ease, a desire to enjoy the conveniences of life, to be distinguished from the crowd, to promote the interests of one's family, and even the sole design of providing against want—these are all ways by which thieves and robbers enter into the Church. And whoever enters by any of these ways, or by simony, craft, solicitation, etc. deserves no better name. Acting through motives of self-interest, and with the desire of providing for himself and his family, are innocent, yea, laudable, in a secular business; but to enter into the ministerial office through motives of this kind is highly criminal before God.

**Verse 2. *He that entereth in by the door***— Observe here the marks, qualities, and duties of a good pastor; The first mark is, that he has a lawful entrance into the ministry by the internal call of Christ, namely, by an impulse proceeding from his Spirit, upon considerations which respect only his glory, and upon motives which aim at nothing but the good of his Church, the salvation of souls, the doing the will of God, and the sacrificing himself entirely to his service, and to that of the meanest of his flock.

**Verse 3. *To him the porter openeth***— Sir Isaac Newton observes that our Lord being near the temple, where sheep were kept in folds to be sold for sacrifices, spoke many things parabolically of sheep, of their shepherds, and of the door to the sheepfold; and discovers that he alluded to the sheepfolds which were to be hired in the market place, by speaking of such folds as a thief could not enter by the door, nor the shepherd himself open, but a porter opened to the shepherd. In the porter opening the door to the true shepherd, we may discover the second mark of a true minister—his labor is crowned with success. The Holy Spirit opens his way into the hearts of his hearers, and he becomes the instrument of their salvation. See Colossians 4:3; 2 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 16:9; Revelation 3:8.

***The sheep hear his voice***— A third mark of a good shepherd is that he speaks so as to instruct the people—the sheep hear His voice; he does not take the fat and the fleece, and leave another hireling on less pay to do the work of the pastoral office. No: himself preaches Christ Jesus the Lord, and in that simplicity too, that is best calculated to instruct the common people. A man who preaches in such a language as the people cannot comprehend may do for a stage-player or a mountebank, but not for a minister of Christ.

***He calleth his own sheep by name***— A fourth mark of a good pastor is that he is well acquainted with his flock; he knows them by name—he takes care to acquaint himself with the spiritual states of all those that are entrusted to him. He speaks to them concerning their souls, and thus getting a thorough knowledge of their state he is the better qualified to profit them by his public ministrations. He who has not a proper acquaintance with the Church of Christ, can never by his preaching build it up in its most holy faith.

***And leadeth them out.***— A fifth mark of a good shepherd is, he leads the flock, does not lord it over God's heritage; nor attempts by any rigorous discipline not founded on the Gospel of Christ, to drive men into the way of life; nor drive them out of it, which many do, by a severity which is a disgrace to the mild Gospel of the God of peace and love.

He leads them out of themselves to Christ, out of the follies, diversions, and amusements of the world, into the path of Christian holiness: in a word, he leads them, by those gentle yet powerful persuasions that flow

from a heart full of the word and love of Christ, into the kingdom and glory of his God.

**Verse 4. *He goeth before them***— A sixth mark of a true pastor is, he gives them a good example: he not only preaches, but he lives, the truth of the Gospel; he enters into the depths of the salvation of God; and, having thus explored the path, he knows how to lead those who are entrusted to his care into the fullness of the blessings of the Gospel of peace. He who does not endeavor to realize in his own soul the truths which he preaches to others will soon be as salt without its savor; his preaching cannot be accompanied with that unction which alone can make it acceptable and profitable to those whose hearts are right with God. The minister who is in this state of salvation the sheep, genuine Christians, will follow, for they know his voice. It was the custom in the eastern countries for the shepherd to go at the head of his sheep, and they followed him from pasture to pasture. I have seen many hundreds of sheep thus following their shepherd on the extensive downs in the western parts of England.

**Verse 5. *And a stranger will they not follow***— That is, a man who, pretending to be a shepherd of the flock of God, is a stranger to that salvation which he professes to preach. His mode of preaching soon proves, to those whose hearts are acquainted with the truths of God, that he is a stranger to them; and therefore, knowing him to have got into the fold in an improper way, they consider him a thief, a robber, and a murderer; and who can blame them if they wholly desert his ministry? There are preachers of this kind among all classes.

**Verse 7. *I am the door of the sheep***.— It is through me only that a man can have a lawful entrance into the ministry; and it is through me alone that mankind can be saved. Instead of, I am the door, the Sahidic version reads, I am the shepherd; but this reading is found in no other version, nor in any MS. It is evidently a mistake of the scribe.

**Verse 8. *All that ever came before me***— Or, as some translate, all that came instead of me, *πρὸ ἐμοῦ*, i.e. all that came as the Christ, or Messiah, such as Theudas, and Judas the Gaulonite, who are mentioned, Acts 5:36, 37; and who were indeed no other than thieves, plundering the country wherever they came; and murderers, not only slaying the simple people

who resisted them, but leading the multitudes of their followers to the slaughter.

But our Lord probably refers to the scribes and Pharisees, who pretended to show the way of salvation to the people—who in fact stole into the fold, and clothed themselves with the fleece, and devoured the sheep.

The words, **προ εμου**, before me, are wanting in EGMS, Mt. BKV, seventy others; Syriac, Persic, Syriac Hieros., Gothic, Saxon, Vulgate, eleven copies of the Itala; Basil, Cyril, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, Augustin, and some others. Griesbach has left them in the text with a note of doubtfulness. The reason why these words are wanting in so many respectable MSS., versions, and fathers, is probably that given by Theophylact, who says that the Manicheans inferred from these words that all the Jewish prophets were impostors. But our Lord has borne sufficient testimony to their inspiration in a variety of places.

**κλεπτης**, and **ληστης**, the thief and the robber, should be properly distinguished; one takes by cunning and stealth; the other openly and by violence. It would not be difficult to find bad ministers who answer to both these characters. Tithes have been often enforced and collected in a most exceptionable manner, and in a most disgraceful spirit.

The reflection of pious Quesnel on this verse is well worth attention. A pastor ought to remember that whoever boasts of being the way of salvation, and the gate of heaven, shows himself to be a thief and an impostor; and though few are arrived at this degree of folly, yet there are many who rely too much upon their own talents, eloquence, and labors, as if the salvation of the sheep depended necessarily thereon: in which respect they are always robbers, since they rob the grace of Christ of the glory of saving the sheep. God often puts such pastors to shame, by not opening the hearts of the people to receive their word: while he blesses those who are humble, in causing them to be heard with attention, and accompanying their preaching with an unction which converts and saves souls. Let every man know that in this respect his sufficiency and success are of the Lord.

**Verse 9. *I am the door: by me if any man enter***, etc.— Those who come for salvation to God, through Christ, shall obtain it: he shall be saved—he

shall have his sins blotted out, his soul purified, and himself preserved unto eternal life. This the scribes and Pharisees could neither promise nor impart.

***Go in and out***— This phrase, in the style of the Hebrews, points out all the actions of a man's life, and the liberty he has of acting, or not acting. A good shepherd conducts his flock to the fields where good pasturage is to be found; watches over them while there, and brings them back again and secures them in the fold. So he that is taught and called of God feeds the flock of Christ with those truths of his word of grace which nourish them unto eternal life; and God blesses together both the shepherd and the sheep, so that going out and coming in they find pasture: every occurrence is made useful to them; and all things work together for their good.

**Verse 10. *But for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy***— Those who enter into the priesthood that they may enjoy the revenues of the Church, are the basest and vilest of thieves and murderers. Their ungodly conduct is a snare to the simple, and the occasion of much scandal to the cause of Christ. Their doctrine is deadly; they are not commissioned by Christ, and therefore they cannot profit the people. Their character is well pointed out by the Prophet Ezekiel, Ezekiel 34:2, etc. Wo be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock, etc, How can worldly-minded, hireling, fox-hunting, and card-playing priests read these words of the Lord, without trembling to the center of their souls! Wo to those parents who bring up their children merely for Church honors and emoluments! Suppose a person have all the Church's revenues, if he have God's wo, how miserable is his portion! Let none apply this censure to any one class of preachers, exclusively.

***That they might have life***— My doctrine tends to life, because it is the true doctrine—that of the false and bad shepherds tends to death, because it neither comes from nor can lead to that God who is the fountain of life.

***Might have it more abundantly*** .— That they might have an abundance, meaning either of life, or of all necessary good things; greater felicity than ever was enjoyed under any period of the Mosaic dispensation; and it is certain that Christians have enjoyed greater blessings and privileges than were ever possessed by the Jews, even in the promised land. If **περισσων**



be considered the accusative fem. Attic, agreeing with ζῶν, (see Parkhurst,) then it signifies more abundant life; that is, eternal life; or spiritual blessings much greater than had ever yet been communicated to man, preparing for a glorious immortality. Jesus is come that men may have abundance; abundance of grace, peace, love, life, and salvation. Blessed be Jesus.

**Verse 11. *I am the good shepherd***— Whose character is the very reverse of that which has already been described. In John 10:7, 9, our Lord had called himself the door of the sheep, as being the sole way to glory, and entrance into eternal life; here he changes the thought, and calls himself the shepherd, because of what he was to do for them that believe in him, in order to prepare them for eternal glory.

***Giveth his life for the sheep.***— That is, gives up his soul as a sacrifice to save them from eternal death.

Some will have the phrase here only to mean hazarding his life in order to protect others; but the 15th, 17th, and 18th verses, {John 10:15, 17, 18,} as well as the whole tenor of the new covenant, sufficiently prove that the first sense is that in which our Lord's words should be understood.

**Verse 12. *But he that is a hireling***— Or, as my old MS. Bible reads it, the marchaunt, he who makes merchandise of men's souls; bartering them, and his own too, for filthy lucre. Let not the reader apply this, or any of the preceding censures, to any particular class or order of men: every religious party may have a hireling priest, or minister; and where the provision is the greatest there the danger is most.

***Whose own the sheep are not***— A hireling priest, who has never been the instrument of bringing souls to God, will not abide with them in the time of danger or persecution. They are not the produce of his labor, faith, and prayers: he has no other interest in their welfare than that which comes from the fleece and the fat. The hireling counts the sheep his own, no longer than they are profitable to him; the good shepherd looks upon them as his, so long as he can be profitable to them.

Among the ancient Jews some kept their own flocks, others hired shepherds to keep them for them. And every owner must naturally have

felt more interest in the preservation of his flock than the hireling could possibly feel.

**Verse 14. *I-know my sheep***— I know, **τα εμα**, them that are mine: I know their hearts, their wishes, their purposes, their circumstances; and I approve of them; for in this sense the word to know is often taken in the Scriptures. Homer represents the goatherds as being so well acquainted with their own, though mixed with others, as easily to distinguish them.

τους δ', ως' αιπολια πλατε' αιγων αιπολοι ανδρες  
 ρεια διακρινεωσιν, επει κε νομω μιγεωσιν.

Iliad. 2. 474.

*“As goat-herds separate their numerous flocks  
 With ease, though fed promiscuous.”*

***And are known of mine.***— They know me as their father, protector, and Savior; they acknowledge me and my truth before the world; and they approve of me, my word, my ordinances, and my people, and manifest this by their attachment to me, and their zeal for my glory. The first clause of the 15th verse should be joined to the fourteenth. {John 10:14-15}

**Verse 16. *Other sheep I have***— The Gentiles and Samaritans. As if our Lord had said, Do not imagine that I shall lay down my life for the Jews, exclusively of all other people; no: I shall die also for the Gentiles; for by the grace, the merciful design and loving purpose of God, I am to taste death for every man, Hebrews 2:9; and, though they are not of this fold now, those among them that believe shall be united with the believing Jews, and made one fold under one shepherd, Ephesians 2:13-17.

The original word, **αυλη**, which is here translated fold, dignifies properly a court. It is probable that our blessed Lord was now standing in what was termed the inner court, or court of the people, in the temple, see John 10:23; and that he referred to the outer court, or court of the Gentiles, because the Gentiles who were proselytes of the gate were permitted to worship in that place; but only those who were circumcised were permitted to come into the inner court, over the entrance of which were written, in large characters of gold, these words, Let no uncircumcised person enter here! Our Lord therefore might at this time have pointed out

to the worshippers in that court, when he spoke these words, and the people would at once perceive that he meant the Gentiles.

**Verse 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me***— As I shall be shortly crucified by you, do not imagine that I am abandoned by my heavenly Father, and therefore fall thus into your hands. The Father loveth me particularly on this account, because I am going to lay down my life for the life of the world. Again, do not suppose that I shall be put to death by your rulers, because I have not strength to resist them. I LAY DOWN my life voluntarily and cheerfully; no one can take it away from me, see John 10:18; and I shall give you the fullest proof of my supreme power by raising, in three days, that very crucified, wounded body from the grave.

**Verse 18. *I have power***— Or, authority, *εξουσιαν*. Our Lord speaks of himself here as man, or the Messiah, as being God's messenger, and sent upon earth to fulfill the Divine will, in dying and rising again for the salvation of men.

***This commandment have I received***— That is, I act according to the Divine commandment in executing these things, and giving you this information.

**Verse 19. *There was a division***— *σχισμα*, a schism, a rent. They were divided in their opinions; one part received the light, and the other resisted it.

***Again***— There was a dissension of this kind before among the same people; see John 9:16.

**Verse 20. *He hath a devil, and is mad***— So, then, a demoniac and a madman were not exactly the same in the apprehension of the Jews; no more than the effect is the same with the cause which produces it. Some will have it that, when the Jews told our Lord that he had a demon, they meant no more than that he was deranged; but here these matters are evidently distinguished. They believed him to be possessed by a demon, who deranged his faculties, and that he must have been a wicked man, and a deceiver, thus to be put under the power of such a spirit.

**Verse 21. *These are not the words of him that hath a devil***.— If he were deranged by an unclean spirit, his words would bear a similitude to the

spirit that produced them; but these are words of deep sense, soberness, and piety: besides, could a demoniac open the eyes of blind men? “This is not the work of a demon. Now we have seen that this man has restored a man who was born blind. Therefore it is demonstrably evident that he is neither a madman nor a demoniac.

Behold the usage which the blessed Lord received from his creatures! And behold with what meekness and gentleness he conducts himself!—not a word of impatience proceeds from his lips; nor a look of contempt or indignation is seen in his face. And what was he doing to merit all this? Why, he was instructing the ignorant, and telling the wretched that he was just going to die to save their souls! Amazing love of God, and ingratitude and obduracy of men! Let not the disciple suppose that, in this respect, he shall be above his master. When a minister of Christ has done his utmost to do good to his fellow creatures, let him not be surprised if he meet with nothing from many but reproaches and persecutions for his pains. The grand point is to take Jesus for an example of suffering, and to be armed with the same mind. It appears that the words spoken by the friendly Jews prevailed; and that the others were obliged to abandon the field.

**Verse 22. *The feast of the dedication***— This was a feast instituted by Judas Maccabeus, in commemoration of his purifying the temple after it had been defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes. This feast began on the twenty-fifth of the month Cisleu, (which answers to the eighteenth of our December,) and continued for eight days. When Antiochus had heard that the Jews had made great rejoicings, on account of a report that had been spread of his death, he hastened out of Egypt to Jerusalem, took the city by storm, and slew of the inhabitants in three days forty thousand persons; and forty thousand more he sold for slaves to the neighboring nations. Not contented with this, he sacrificed a great sow on the altar of burnt offerings; and, broth being made by his command of some of the flesh, he sprinkled it all over the temple, that he might defile it to the uttermost. See Prideaux’s Connection, vol. iii. p. 236, edit. 1725. After this, the whole of the temple service seems to have been suspended for three years, great dilapidations having taken place also in various parts of the buildings: see 1 Macc. 4:36, etc. As Judas Maccabaeus not only restored the temple service, and cleansed it from pollution, etc., but also repaired the ruins of it, the feast was called **τα εγκαινία**, the renovation.

*It was winter.*— *χειμων ην*, or, it was stormy or rainy weather. And this is the reason, probably, why our Lord is represented as walking in Solomon's porch, or portico, John 10:23. Though it certainly was in winter when this feast was held, yet it does not appear that the word above refers so much to the time of the year as to the state of the weather. Indeed, there was no occasion to add it was winter, when the feast of the dedication was mentioned, because every body knew that, as that feast was held on the twenty-fifth of the month Cisleu, it was in the winter season.

John has here omitted all that Jesus did from the time when he left Jerusalem, after the feast of tabernacles in September was ended, until the feast of the dedication in the December following: and he did it probably because he found that the other evangelists had given an account of what our Lord did in the interval. St. Luke relates what our Lord did on his way from Galilee to Jerusalem, to this feast, Luke 17:11-37; 18:1-14. Observe, likewise, that this time here mentioned was the fourth time (according to John's account) that Jesus went up to the feasts at Jerusalem in about a year: for, first, he went up to the feast of the passover, John 2:13; next to the feast of pentecost, as it seems to have been, John 5:1; then to the feast of tabernacles, John 7:2, 10; and, lastly, to the feast of the passover in which he was crucified. John seems purposely to have pointed out his presence in Jerusalem at these four feasts, because all the other evangelists have omitted the mention of every one of them. See Bishop Pearce; and see the note on John 5:1.

**Verse 23. *Solomon's porch.***— By what we find in Josephus, Ant. b. xx. c. 8, s. 7, a portico built by Solomon, on the east side of the outer court of the temple, was left standing by Herod, when he rebuilt the temple. This portico was four hundred cubits long, and was left standing, probably, because of its grandeur and beauty. But when Agrippa came to Jerusalem, a few years before the destruction of the city by the Romans, and about eighty years after Herod had begun his building, (till which time what Herod had begun was not completed,) the Jews solicited Agrippa to repair this portico at his own expense, using for argument, not only that the building was growing ruinous, but that otherwise eighteen thousand workmen, who had all of them, until then, been employed in carrying on the works of the temple, would be all at once deprived of a livelihood.

**Verse 24. *How long dost thou make us to doubt?***— Or, How long dost thou kill us with suspense? ἕως ποτε την ψυχην ημων αιρεις, literally, How long wilt thou take away our life? Mr. Markland would read αιωρεις for αιρεις, which amounts nearly to the same sense with the above. The Jews asked this question through extreme perfidiousness: they wished to get him to declare himself king of the Jews, that they might accuse him to the Roman governor; and by it they insolently insinuated that all the proofs he had hitherto given them of his Divine mission were good for nothing.

**Verse 25. *I told you,*** etc.— That is, I told you before what I tell you now again, that the works which I do, bear testimony to me. I have told you that I am the light of the world: the Son of God: the good shepherd: that I am come to save—to give life—to give liberty—to redeem you: that, in order to this, I must die, and rise again; and that I am absolute master of my life, and of my death. Have you not noticed my omniscience, in searching and discovering the very secrets of your hearts? Have you not seen my omnipotence in the miracles which I have wrought? Have not all these been sufficient to convince you?—and yet ye will not believe!—See the works which bore testimony to him, as the Messiah, enumerated, Matthew 11:5.

**Verse 26. *Ye are not of my sheep***— Ye have not the disposition of those who come unto me to be instructed and saved: see what follows.

**Verse 27. *My sheep hear my voice***— But ye will not hear:—my sheep follow me; but ye will neither follow nor acknowledge me. Any person who reads without prejudice may easily see, that our Lord does not at all insinuate that these persons could not believe, because God had made it impossible to them; but simply because they did not hear and follow Christ, which the whole of our blessed Lord's discourse proves that they might have done. The sheep of Christ are not those who are included in any eternal decree, to the exclusion of others from the yearnings of the bowels of eternal mercy; but they are those who hear, believe in, follow, and obey the Savior of the world.

**Verse 28. *They shall never perish***— Why? Because they hear my voice, and follow me; therefore I know, I approve of and love them, and give them eternal life. They who continue to hear Christ's voice, and to follow him, shall never perish. They give themselves up to God—believe so on

Jesus that he lives in their hearts: God hath given unto them eternal life, and this life is in his Son; and he that hath the Son hath life, 1 John 5:11, 12. Now it is evident that only those who have Christ living in and governing their souls, so that they possess the mind that was in him, are his sheep—are those that shall never perish, because they have this eternal life abiding in them: therefore to talk of a man's being one of the elect—one that shall never perish—one who shall have eternal life—who shall never be plucked out of the hand of God, etc., while he lives in sin, has no Christ in his heart, has either never received or fallen away from the grace of God, is as contrary to common sense as it is to the nature and testimonies of the Most High. Final perseverance implies final faithfulness—he that endures to the end shall be saved—he that is faithful unto death shall have a crown of life. And will any man attempt to say that he who does not endure to the end, and is unfaithful, shall ever enter into life?

**Verse 29. *My Father is greater than all***— More powerful than all the united energies of men and demons. He who loves God must be happy; and he who fears him need fear nothing on this side eternity.

**Verse 30. *I and my Father are one***.— If Jesus Christ were not God, could he have said these words without being guilty of blasphemy? It is worthy of remark that Christ does not say, I and MY Father, which my our translation very improperly supplies, and which in this place would have conveyed a widely different meaning: for then it would imply that the human nature of Christ, of which alone, I conceive, God is ever said to be the Father in Scripture, was equal to the Most High: but he says, speaking then as God over all, I and THE Father, *εγω και ο πατηρ εν εσμεν*—the Creator of all things, the Judge of all men, the Father of the spirits of all flesh—are ONE, ONE in nature, ONE in all the attributes of Godhead, and ONE in all the operations of those attributes: and so it is evident the Jews understood him. See John 17:11, 22.

**Verse 31. *The Jews took up stones***— To stone him as a blasphemer, Leviticus 24:14-16, because he said he was one with God. The evangelist adds the word again, because they had attempted to do this before, see John 8:59; but it seems they were prevented from doing this now by the following discourse.

**Verse 32. *Many good works have I showed you***— I have healed your sick, delivered those of you who were possessed from the power of demons; I have fed multitudes of your poor, and I have taught you in all places, at all times, without expense, with patience; and is this my reward?

To show good works or good things is a Hebraism, which signifies to do them really, to give good things liberally. The phrase is similar to the following: Who will SHOW us any good? Psalm 4:6; i.e. who shall give us good things. SHOW us thy mercy, Psalm 85:7; i.e. give us to feel the effects of thy mercy. Thou hast SHOWED thy people hard things, Psalm 60:3; i.e. thou hast treated them with rigor. Thou hast SHOWED me great and sore troubles, Psalm 71:20; i.e. thou hast exposed me to terrible hardships.

**Verse 33. *But for blasphemy***— I have elsewhere shown that the original word, *βλασφημεῖν*, when applied to men, signifies to speak injuriously of their persons, character, connections, etc.; but when applied to God it signifies to speak impiously, i.e. contrary to his nature, perfections, the wisdom of his providence, or goodness of his works.

***Thou, being a man***— That is, only a man—makest thyself God. When Christ said before, John 10:30, I and the Father are one, had the Jews understood him (as many called Christians profess to do) as only saying he had a unity of sentiments with the Father, they would not have attempted to treat him for this as a blasphemer; because in this sense Abraham, Isaac, Moses, David, and all the prophets, were one with God. But what irritated them so much was that they understood him as speaking of a unity of nature. Therefore they say here, thou makest thyself God; which word they understood, not in a figurative, metaphorical, or improper sense, but in the most literal meaning of the term.

**Verse 34. *Is it not written in your law***— The words which our Lord quotes are taken from Psalm 82:6, which shows that, under the word law, our Lord comprised the Jewish sacred writings in general. See also John 12:34; 15:25.

***Ye are gods?***— That is, judges, who are called *אלהים* *elohim*. That judges are here meant appears from Psalm 82:2, etc., and also from what follows



here. And this is probably the only place where the word אלהים is applied to any but the true God. See Parkhurst under the root אלה.

**Verse 35. *Unto whom the word of God came***— Bishop Pearce thinks that “the word λογος, here, is put for λογος κρισεως, the word or matter of judgment, as in 2 Chronicles 19:6, where Jehoshaphat, setting up judges in the land of Judah, says: Take heed what ye do: judge not for men, but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment-λογοι της κρισεως, in the words or matters of judgment,-SEPT., which is nearly according to the Hebrew to בדבר משפט bedebbar mishpat, in the word or matter of judgment. In Deuteronomy 1:17, when a charge is given to the judges that they should not be afraid of the face of man, this reason is given: for the judgment is God’s. Hence it appears probable that λογος is here used for λογος κρισεως: and it is called λογος θεου, because it is the judgment that properly belongs to God, and which they who give it on earth give only as acting in the stead of God. A way of speaking very like to this is found in Hebrews 4:13, where the writer says, προς ον ημιν ο λογος, with whom we have to do, i.e. by whom we are to be judged.”

But the words λογος θεου may be here understood for the order, commission, or command of God; and so it properly signifies, Luke 3:2; and in this sense it is found often employed in the Old Testament. When it is there said that the word of the Lord came, etc., it means, God gave an order, commission, etc., to such a person, to declare or do such and such things.

***And the scripture cannot be broken***— αυθηναι, dissolved, rendered of none effect, i.e. it cannot be gainsayed or set aside; every man must believe this, because it is the declaration of God. If those were termed gods who were only earthly magistrates, fallible mortals, and had no particular influence of the Divine Spirit; and that they are termed gods is evident from that scripture which cannot be gainsayed; what greater reason then have I to say, I am the Son of God, and one with God, when, as Messiah, I have been consecrated, sent into the world, to instruct and save men; and when, as God, I have wrought miracles which could be performed by no power less than that of omnipotence?

**Verse 37. *If I do not the works***, etc.— I desire you to believe only on the evidence of my works: if I do not do such works as God only can perform, then believe me not.

**Verse 38. *Believe the works***— Though ye do not now credit what I have said to you, yet consider my works, and then ye will see that these works prove that I am in the Father and the Father in me; and, consequently, that I and the Father are one. This seems to be the force of our Lord's argument; and every man must see and feel that it is conclusive. There was no possibility of weakening the force of this reasoning but by asserting that these miracles were not wrought by the power of God; and then they must have proved that not only a man, but a bad man, such as they said Jesus was, could work these miracles. As this was impossible, then the argument of Christ had a complete triumph.

**Verse 39. *They sought again to take him***— They could not reply to his arguments but by stones. The evidence of the truth could not be resisted; and they endeavored to destroy the person who spoke it. Truth may confound the obstinately wicked, but it does not convert them; and it is a just judgment of God, to leave those to perish in their gainsayings who obstinately continue to gainsay and disbelieve.

***But he escaped***— In such a way as we know not, for the evangelist has not specified the manner of it.

**Verse 40. *Beyond Jordan***— Rather, to the side of Jordan, not beyond it. See the note on John 6:22, and Matthew 19:1.

***Where John at first baptized***— That is, at Bethabara: see John 1:28. Afterwards, John baptized at AEnon: John 3:23.

**Verse 42. *Many believed on him there***.— The people believed on him: 1. because of the testimony of John the Baptist whom they knew to be a good and a wise man, and a prophet of the Lord; and they knew he could neither deceive nor be deceived in this matter; and, 2. they believed because of the miracles which they saw Jesus work. These fully proved that all that John had said of him was true. The scribes and Pharisees with all their science could not draw a conclusion so just. Truth and common sense are often on the side of the common people, whom the insolently wise, the

unsanctifiedly learned, and the tyrannically powerful sometimes disingenuously brand with the epithets of mob and swinish multitude.

1. THIS and the preceding chapter contain two remarkable discomfitures of the Jewish doctors. In the former they were confounded by the testimony of a plain uneducated man, simply appealing to the various circumstances of a matter of fact, at which they cavilled, and which they endeavored to decry. In this chapter the wise are taken in their own craftiness: the Pharisees are confounded by that wisdom which is from above, speaking of and manifesting the deep things of God. Sometimes God himself stops the mouths of gainsayers; at other times he makes the simplest of his followers too mighty for the most learned among the doctors. Ancient and modern martyrologies of the people of God abound with proofs of both these facts. And the persecutions of the Protestants by the Papists in the reign of Queen Mary afford a very large proportion of proofs. In these the mighty power of God, and the prevalence of truth, were gloriously apparent. Both the word of God and the Protestant cause were nobly illustrated by those transactions. May that abomination that maketh desolate never more sit in the holy place!

2. It must be remarked, by every serious reader, that our Lord did frequently speak of himself to the Jews, as being not only sent of God as their Messiah, but as being one with him. And it is as evident that in this sense the priests and Pharisees understood him; and it was because they would not credit this that they accused him of blasphemy. Now, if our Lord was not the person they understood him to state himself to be, he had the fairest opportunity, from their strong remonstrances, to correct their misapprehension of his words, if they really had mistaken his meaning-but this he never attempts. He rather strengthens his assertions in his consequent discourses with them; which, had not his positions been true, he could not have done, even as an honest man. He not only asserted himself to be equal with God, but wished them to believe it to be true; and he amply confirmed this heavenly doctrine by the miracles he wrought.

## CHAPTER 11.

Account of the sickness of Lazarus, 1. His sisters Martha and Mary send for Christ, 2. Our Lord's discourse with his disciples on this sickness and consequent death, 3-16. He arrives at Bethany four days after the burying of Lazarus, 17, 18. Martha meets Christ—their conversation, 19-27. She returns and Mary goes out to meet him, in great distress, 28-33. Christ comes to the grave—his conversation there, 34-42. He raises Lazarus from the dead, 43-46. The priests and Pharisees, hearing of this, hold a council, and plot his destruction, 47, 48. The remarkable prophecy of Caiaphas, and the consequent proceedings of the Jews, 49-53. Jesus withdraws into a city called Ephraim, 54. They lay wait for him at the passover, 55-67.

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11.

**Verse 1. *Lazarus, of Bethany***— St. John, who seldom relates any thing but what the other evangelists have omitted, does not tell us what gave rise to that familiar acquaintance and friendship that subsisted between our Lord and this family. It is surprising that the other evangelists have omitted so remarkable an account as this is, in which some of the finest traits in our Lord's character are exhibited. The conjecture of Grotius has a good deal of weight. He thinks that the other three evangelists wrote their histories during the life of Lazarus; and that they did not mention him for fear of exciting the malice of the Jews against him. And indeed we find, from John 12:10, that they sought to put Lazarus to death also, that our Lord might not have one monument of his power and goodness remaining in the land. Probably both Lazarus and his sisters were dead before St. John wrote. Bethany was situated at the foot of the mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. Bishop Pearce observes that “there is a large gap in John's history of Christ in this place. What is mentioned in the preceding chapter passed at the feast of the dedication, John 10:22, about the middle of our December; and this miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead seems to have been wrought but a little before the following passover, in the end of March, at which time Jesus was crucified, as may (he thinks) be gathered from verses 54 and 55 of this chapter, {John 10:54, 55}, and

from John 12:9.” John has, therefore, according to the bishop’s calculation, omitted to mention the several miracles which our Lord wrought for above three months after the things mentioned in the preceding chapter.

Calmet says, Christ left Jerusalem the day after the dedication took place, which was the 18th of December. He went then to Bethabara, where he continued preaching and his disciples baptizing. About the middle of the following January Lazarus fell sick: Christ did not leave Bethabara till after the death of Lazarus, which happened about the 18th of the same month.

Bishop Newcome supposes that our Lord might have stayed about a month at Bethabara.

The harmonists and chronologists differ much in fixing dates, and ascertaining times. In cases of this nature, I believe men may innocently guess as well as they can; but they should assert nothing.

**Verse 2. *It was that Mary which anointed***— There is much disagreement between learned men relative to the two anointings of our Lord, and the persons who performed these acts. The various conjectures concerning these points the reader will find in the notes on Matthew 26:7, etc., but particularly at the end of that chapter. {Matthew 26:75}

Dr. Lightfoot inquires, Why should Bethany be called the town of Martha and Mary, and not of Lazarus? And he thinks the reason is, that Martha and Mary had been well known by that anointing of our Lord, which is mentioned Luke 7:37; (see the note there;) but the name of Lazarus had not been mentioned till now, there being no transaction by which he could properly be brought into view. He therefore thinks that the aorist *ἀλειψασα*, which we translate anointed, should have its full force, and be translated, who had formerly anointed; and this he thinks to have been the reason of that familiarity which subsisted between our Lord and this family; and, on this ground, they could confidently send for our Lord when Lazarus fell sick. This seems a very reasonable conjecture; and it is very likely that the familiarity arose out of the anointing.

Others think that the anointing of which the evangelist speaks is that mentioned John 12:1, etc., and which happened about six days before the passover. St. John, therefore, is supposed to anticipate the account,

because it served more particularly to designate the person of whom he was speaking.

**Verse 3. *He whom thou lovest is sick.***— Nothing could be more simple, nor more modest, than this prayer: they do not say, Come and heal him: or, Command the disease to depart even where thou art, and it will obey thee:—they content themselves with simply stating the case, and using an indirect but a most forcible argument, to induce our Lord to show forth his power and goodness:—He is sick, and thou lovest him; therefore thou canst neither abandon him, nor us.

**Verse 4. *This sickness is not unto death***— Not to final privation of life at this time; but a temporary death shall be now permitted, that the glory of God may appear in the miracle of his resurrection. It is very likely that this verse contains the message which Christ sent back, by the person whom the afflicted sisters had sent to him; and this, no doubt, served much to strengthen their confidence, though their faith must have been greatly exercised by the death of their brother: for when this took place, though they buried him, yet they believed, even then, probably on the ground of this message, that Jesus might raise him from the dead. See John 11:22.

**Verse 5. *Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.***— Therefore his staying two days longer in Bethabara was not through lack of affection for this distressed family, but merely that he might have a more favorable opportunity of proving to them how much he loved them. Christ never denies a less favor, but in order to confer a greater. God's delays, in answering prayers offered to him by persons in distress, are often proofs of his purpose to confer some great kindness, and they are also proofs that his wisdom finds it necessary to permit an increase of the affliction, that his goodness may be more conspicuous in its removal.

**Verse 8. *The Jews of late sought to stone thee***— It was but a few weeks before that they were going to stone him in the temple, on the day of the feast of the dedication, John 10:31.

**Verse 9. *Are there not twelve hours in the day?***— The Jews, as well as most other nations, divided the day, from sun-rising to sun-setting, into twelve equal parts; but these parts, or hours, were longer or shorter, according to the different seasons of the year. See the note on John 1:39.

Our Lord alludes to the case of a traveler, who has to walk the whole day: the day points out the time of life—the night that of death. He has already used the same mode of speech, John 9:4: I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. Here he refers to what the apostles had just said—The Jews were but just now going to stone thee. Are there not, said he, twelve hours in the day? I have not traveled these twelve hours yet—my last hour is not yet come; and the Jews, with all their malice and hatred, shall not be able to bring it a moment sooner than God has purposed. I am immortal till my work is done; and this, that I am now going to Bethany to perform, is a part of it. When all is completed, then their hour, and that of the power of darkness, shall commence. See Luke 22:53.

*If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not*— A traveler should use the day to walk in, and not the night. During the day he has the sun, the light of this world: he sees his way, and does not stumble: but, if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in it, John 11:10; i.e. there is no sun above the horizon. The words *εν αυτω*, John 11:10, refer not to the man, but to the world, the sun, its light, not being above the horizon. Life is the time to fulfill the will of God, and to prepare for glory. Jesus is the light of the world; he that walks in his Spirit, and by his direction, cannot stumble—cannot fall into sin, nor be surprised by an unexpected death. But he who walks in the night, in the darkness of his own heart, and according to the maxims of this dark world, he stumbles—falls into sin, and at last falls into hell. Reader! do not dream of walking to heaven in the night of thy death. God has given thee the warning: receive it, and begin to live to him, and for eternity.

**Verse 11.** *Lazarus sleepeth*— It was very common among the Jews to express death by sleep; and the expression, falling asleep—sleeping with their fathers, etc., were in great use among them. The Hebrews probably used this form of speech to signify their belief in the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body.

It is certain that our Lord received no intimation of Lazarus's death from any person, and that he knew it through that power by which he knows all things.

**Verse 12. *If he sleep, he shall do well.***— That is, if he sleep only, etc. Though the word sleep frequently meant death, (see Acts 7:60; 1 Corinthians 11:30; 15:18, 20,) yet, as it was an ambiguous term, the disciples appear here to have mistaken its meaning. Because, in certain acute disorders, the composing the patient to rest was a favorable sign; therefore the words, If he sleep, he shall do well, or recover, became a proverbial forth of speech among the Jews. In most diseases, sleep is a very favorable prognostic: hence that saying of Menander: —

υπνος δε πασης εστιν υγεια νοσου.

Sleep is a remedy for every disease. See Grotius here. The meaning of the disciples seems to have been this: There can be no need for thee to go into Judea to awake our friend Lazarus; he will awake time enough, and his very sleep is a presage of his recovery: therefore do not hazard thy life by going.

**Verse 15. *I am glad for your sakes that I was not there***— “I tell you plainly, Lazarus is dead: and I am glad I was not there-if I had been, I should have been prevailed on to have healed him almost as soon as he fell sick, and I should not have had so striking an occasion to manifest the glory of God to you, and to establish you in the faith.” It was a miracle to discover that Lazarus was dead, as no person had come to announce it. It was a greater miracle to raise a dead man than to cure a sick man. And it was a still greater miracle, to raise one that was three or four days buried, and in whose body putrefaction might have begun to take place, than to raise one that was but newly dead. See John 11:39.

**Verse 16. *Thomas, which is called Didymus***— Thomas, or תאום Thaum, was his Hebrew name, and signifies a twin-one who had a brother or a sister born with him at the same time: Didymus, διδυμος, is a literal translation of the Hebrew word into Greek. In Genesis 25:24, Esau and Jacob are called תומים thomeem, twins; Septuag. διδυμα, from διδυμος, a twin-from the Anglo-Saxon (A.S.), to double.

***Let us also go, that we may die with him.***— That is, “Seeing we cannot dissuade our Lord from going, and his death is likely to be the inevitable consequence, let us give him the fullest proof we can of our love, by going and suffering death with him.” Some think Thomas spoke these words



peevishly, and that they should be translated thus, Must we also go, and expose ourselves to destruction with him? which is as much as to say: “If he will obstinately go and risk his life in so imminent a danger, let us act with more prudence and caution.” But I think the first sense is to be preferred. When a matter is spoken which concerns the moral character of a person, and which may be understood in a good and a bad sense, that sense which is most favorable to the person should certainly be adopted. This is taking things by the best handle, and both justice and mercy require it. The conduct of most men widely differs from this: of such an old proverb says, “They feed like the flies-pass over all a man’s whole parts, to light upon his sores.”

**Verse 17. *He had lain in the grave four days already.***— Our Lord probably left Bethabara the day, or the day after, Lazarus died. He came to Bethany three days after; and it appears that Lazarus had been buried about four days, and consequently that he had been put in the grave the day or day after he died. Though it was the Jewish custom to embalm their dead, yet we find, from John 11:39, that he had not been embalmed; and God wisely ordered this, that the miracle might appear the more striking.

**Verse 18. *Fifteen furlongs***— About two miles: for the Jewish miles contained about seven furlongs and a half. So Lightfoot, and the margin.

**Verse 19. *Many of the Jews came***— Bethany being so nigh to Jerusalem, many of the relatives and friends of the family came, according to the Jewish custom, to mourn with the afflicted sisters. Mourning, among the Jews, lasted about thirty days: the three first days were termed days of weeping: then followed seven of lamentation. During the three days, the mourner did no servile work; and, if any one saluted him, he did not return the salutation. During the seven days, he did no servile work, except in private-lay with his bed on the floor-did not put on his sandals-did not wash nor anoint himself-had his head covered-and neither read in the law, the Mishnah, nor the Talmud. All the thirty days he continued unshaven, wore no white or new clothes, and did not sew up the rents which he had made in his garments. See Lightfoot, and see on John 11:31.

**Verse 20. *Martha-went and met him***— Some suppose she was the eldest of the two sisters-she seems to have had the management of the house. See Luke 10:40.

***Mary sat still in the house.***— It is likely that by this circumstance the evangelist intended to convey the idea of her sorrow and distress; because anciently afflicted persons were accustomed to put themselves in this posture, as expressive of their distress; their grief having rendered them as it were immovable. See Ezra 9:3, 4; Nehemiah 1:4; Psalm 137:1; Isaiah 47:1; Luke 1:79; and Matthew 27:61.

**Verse 21. *If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.***— Mary said the same words to him a little after, John 11:32, which proves that these sisters had not a complete knowledge of the omnipotence of Christ: they thought he could cure at hand, but not at a distance; or they thought that it was because he did not know of their brother's indisposition that he permitted him to die. In either of these cases it plainly appears they had not a proper notion of his divinity; and indeed the following verse proves that they considered him in no other light than that of a prophet.

Query—Was it not proper that Christ should, in general, as much as might be, hide the knowledge of his divinity from those with whom he ordinarily lodged? Had they known him fully, would not the reverence and awe connected with such a knowledge have overwhelmed them?

**Verse 22. *I know, that even now***— She durst not ask so great a favor in direct terms; she only intimated modestly that she knew he could do it.

**Verse 23. *Thy brother shall rise again.***— That is, directly; for it was by raising him immediately from the dead that he intended to comfort her.

**Verse 24. *I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection***— The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was then commonly received; and though it was our Lord who fully exemplified it by his own resurrection, yet the opinion was common, not only among God's people, but among all those who believed in the God of Israel. The Jewish writings after the captivity are full of this doctrine. See 2 Macc. 7:9, 14, 23, 36; 12:43; 14:46; Wisd. 5:1, 7, 17; 6:6, 7. See also Josephus and the Targums, passim.

**Verse 25. *I am the resurrection, and the life***— Thou sayest that thy brother shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day; but by whom shall he arise if not by ME, who am the author of the resurrection, and the source of life? And is it not as easy for me to raise him now as to raise him then? Thus our blessed Lord raises her hope, animates her faith, and

teaches her that he was not a mere man, but the essential principle and author of existence.

***Though he were dead***— Every man who has believed or shall believe in me, though his believing shall not prevent him from dying a natural death, yet his body shall be re-animated, and he shall live with me in an eternal glory. And every one who is now dead, dead to God, dead in trespasses and sins, if he believe in me, trust on me as his sole Savior, he shall live, shall be quickened by my Spirit, and live a life of faith, working by love.

**Verse 26. *Shall never die***.— Or, Shall not die for ever. Though he die a temporal death. he shall not continue under its power for ever; but shall have a resurrection to life eternal.

***Believest thou this?***— God has determined to work in the behalf of men only in proportion to their faith in him: it was necessary, therefore, that these persons should be well instructed concerning his nature, that they might find no obstacles to their faith. These sisters had considered him only as a prophet hitherto; and it was necessary that they should now be farther instructed, that, as God was to exert himself, they might believe that God was there.

**Verse 27. *Yea, Lord: I believe***— **ΠΕΠΙΣΤΕΥΚΑ**, I have believed. Either meaning that she had believed this for some time past, or that, since he began to teach her, her faith had been considerable increased; but verbs preter, in Greek, are often used to signify the present. Martha here acknowledges Christ for the Messiah promised to their fathers; but her faith goes no farther; and, having received some hope of her brother's present resurrection, she waited for no farther instruction, but ran to call her sister.

**Verse 28. *The Master is come***— This was the appellation which he had in the family; and from these words it appears that Christ had inquired for Mary, desiring to have her present, that he might strengthen her faith, previously to his raising her brother.

**Verse 30. *Jesus was not yet come into the town***— As the Jewish burying places were without their cities and villages, it appears that the place where our Savior was, when Martha met him, was not far from the place where Lazarus was buried. See the note on Luke 7:12.

**Verse 31.** *She goeth unto the grave to weep there.*— It appears that it was the custom for the nearest relatives of the deceased to go at times, during the three days of weeping, accompanied by their friends and neighbors, to mourn near the graves of the deceased. They supposed that the spirit hovered about the place where the body was laid for three days, to see whether it might be again permitted to enter, but, when it saw the face change, it knew that all hope was now past. It was on this ground that the seven days of lamentation succeeded the three days of weeping, because all hope was now taken away. They had traditions that, in the course of three days, persons who had died were raised again to life. See Lightfoot.

Mr. Ward says: “I once saw some Mussulman women, near Calcutta, lying on the new-made grave of a relation, weeping bitterly. In this manner the Mussulman females weep and strew flowers over the graves of relations, at the expiration of four days, and forty days, after the interment.”

**Verse 33.** *He groaned in the spirit,* etc.— Here the blessed Jesus shows himself to be truly man; and a man, too, who, notwithstanding his amazing dignity and excellence, did not feel it beneath him to sympathize with the distressed, and weep with those who wept. After this example of our Lord, shall we say that it is weakness, folly, and sin to weep for the loss of relatives? He who says so, and can act in a similar case to the above according to his own doctrine, is a reproach to the name of man. Such apathy never came from God: it is generally a bad scion, implanted in a nature miserably depraved, deriving its nourishment from a perverted spirit or a hardened heart; though in some cases it is the effect of an erroneous, ascetic mode of discipline.

It is abolishing one of the finest traits in our Lord’s human character to say that he wept and mourned here because of sin and its consequences. No: Jesus had humanity in its perfection, and humanity unadulterated is generous and sympathetic. A particular friend of Jesus was dead; and, as his friend, the affectionate soul of Christ was troubled, and he mingled his sacred tears with those of the afflicted relatives. Behold the man, in his deep, heart-felt trouble, and in his flowing tears! But when he says, Lazarus, come forth! behold the GOD! and the God too of infinite clemency, love, and power. Can such a Jesus refuse to comfort the

distressed, or save the lost? Can he restrain his mercies from the penitent soul, or refuse to hear the yearnings of his own bowels? Can such a character be inattentive to the welfare of his creatures? Here is God manifested in the flesh! living in human nature, feeling for the distressed, and suffering for the lost! Reader! ask thy soul, ask thy heart, ask the bowels of thy compassions, if thou hast any, could this Jesus unconditionally reprobate from eternity any soul of man? Thou answerest, No! God repeats, No! Universal nature re-echoes, No! and the tears and blood of Jesus eternally say, NO!

**Verse 35. *Jesus wept.***— The least verse in the Bible, yet inferior to none. Some of the ruthless ancients, improperly styled fathers of the Church, thought that weeping was a degradation of the character of Christ; and therefore, according to the testimony of Epiphanius, Anchorat. c. 13, razed out of the Gospel of St. Luke the place (Luke 19:41) where Christ is said to have wept over Jerusalem.

**Verse 36. *Behold how he loved him!***— And when we see him pouring out his blood and life upon the cross for mankind, we may with exultation and joy cry out, Behold how he hath loved Us!

**Verse 37. *Could not this man, which opened the eyes,*** etc.— Through the maliciousness of their hearts, these Jews considered the tears of Jesus as a proof of his weakness. We may suppose them to have spoken thus: “If he loved him so well, why did he not heal him? And if he could have healed him, why did he not do it, seeing he testifies so much sorrow at his death? Let none hereafter vaunt the miracle of the blind man’s cure; if he had been capable of doing that, he would not have permitted his friend to die.” Thus will men reason, or rather madden, concerning the works and providence of God; till, by his farther miracles of mercy or judgment, he converts or confounds them.

**Verse 38. *It was a cave,*** etc.— It is likely that several of the Jewish burying-places were made in the sides of rocks; some were probably dug down like a well from the upper surface, and then hollowed under into niches, and a flat stone, laid down upon the top, would serve for a door. Yet, from what the evangelist says, there seems to have been something peculiar in the formation of this tomb. It might have been a natural grotto, or dug in the side of a rock or hill, and the lower part of the door level with

the ground, or how could Lazarus have come forth, as he is said to have done, John 11:44?

**Verse 39. *Take ye away the stone.***— He desired to convince all those who were at the place, and especially those who took away the stone, that Lazarus was not only dead, but that putrescency had already taken place, that it might not be afterwards said that Lazarus had only fallen into a lethargy; but that the greatness of the miracle might be fully evinced.

***He stinketh***— The body is in a state of putrefaction. The Greek word οζω signifies simply to smell, whether the scent be good or bad; but the circumstances of the case sufficiently show that the latter is its meaning here. Our translators might have omitted the uncouth term in the common text; but they chose literally to follow the Anglo-Saxon, (Anglo-Saxon), and it would be now useless to attempt any change, as the common reading would perpetually recur, and cause all attempts at mending to sound even worse than that in the text.

***For he hath been dead four days.***— τεταρταίος γὰρ ἐστὶ, This is the fourth day, i.e. since his interment. Christ himself was buried on the same day on which he was crucified, see John 19:42, and it is likely that Lazarus was buried also on the same day on which he died. See on John 11:17.

**Verse 40. *If thou wouldest believe,*** etc.— So it appears that it is faith alone that interests the miraculous and saving power of God in behalf of men. Instead of δοξάν, the glory, one MS. reads δυνάμιν, the miraculous power.

**Verse 41. *Where the dead was laid.***— These words are wanting in BC\*DL, three others; Syriac, Persic, Arabic, Sahidic, Aethiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, Saxon, and in all the Itala. Griesbach leaves them out of the text.

***Father, I thank thee***— As it was a common opinion that great miracles might be wrought by the power and in the name of the devil, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and invoked the supreme God before these unbelieving Jews, that they might see that it was by his power, and by his only, that this miracle was done; that every hinderance to this people's faith might be completely taken out of the way, and that their faith might stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of the Most High. On

this account our Lord says, he spoke because of the multitude, that they might see there was no diabolic influence here, and that God in his mercy had visited his people.

**Verse 43. *He cried with a loud voice***— In John 5:25, our Lord had said, that the time was coming, in which the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God, and live. He now fulfils that prediction, and cries aloud, that the people may take notice, and see that even death is subject to the sovereign command of Christ.

Jesus Christ, says Quesnel, omitted nothing to save this dead person: he underwent the fatigue of a journey, he wept, he prayed, he groaned, he cried with a loud voice, and commanded the dead to come forth. What ought not a minister to do in order to raise a soul, and especially a soul long dead in trespasses and sins!

**Verse 44. *Bound hand and foot with grave-clothes***— Swathed about with rollers-*κεριριας*, from *κειρω*, I cut. These were long slips of linen a few inches in breadth, with which the body and limbs of the dead were swathed, and especially those who were embalmed, that the aromatics might be kept in contact with the flesh. But as it is evident that Lazarus had not been embalmed, it is probable that his limbs were not swathed together, as is the constant case with those who are embalmed, but separately, so that he could come out of the tomb at the command of Christ, though he could not walk freely till the rollers were taken away. But some will have it that he was swathed exactly like a mummy, and that his coming out in that state was another miracle. But there is no need of multiplying miracles in this case: there was one wrought which was a most sovereign proof of the unlimited power and goodness of God. Several of the primitive fathers have adduced this resurrection of Lazarus as the model, type, proof, and pledge of the general resurrection of the dead.

***Loose him, and let him go.***— He would have the disciples and those who were at hand take part in this business, that the fullest conviction might rest on every person's mind concerning the reality of what was wrought. He whom the grace of Christ converts and restores to life comes forth, at his call, from the dark, dismal grave of sin, in which his soul has long been buried: he walks, according to the command of Christ, in newness of life;

and gives, by the holiness of his conduct, the fullest proof to all his acquaintance that he is alive from the dead.

**Verse 45. *Many of the Jews-believed on him.***— They saw that the miracle was incontestable; and they were determined to resist the truth no longer. Their friendly visit to these distressed sisters became the means of their conversion. How true is the saying of the wise man, It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting! Ecclesiastes 7:2. God never permits men to do any thing, through a principle of kindness to others, without making it instrumental of good to themselves. He that watereth shall be watered also himself, Proverbs 11:25. Therefore, let no man withhold good, while it is in the power of his hand to do it. Proverbs 3:27.

**Verse 46. *But some of them went their ways***— Astonishing! Some that had seen even this miracle steeled their hearts against it; and not only so, but conspired the destruction of this most humane, amiable, and glorious Savior! Those who obstinately resist the truth of God are capable of every thing that is base, perfidious, and cruel.

**Verse 47. *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council***— The Pharisees, as such, had no power to assemble councils; and therefore only those are meant who were scribes or elders of the people, in conjunction with Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas, who were the high priests here mentioned. See John 18:13, 24.

***What do we?***— This last miracle was so clear, plain, and incontestable, that they were driven now to their wit's end. Their own spies had come and borne testimony of it. They told them what they had seen, and on their word, as being in league with themselves against Jesus, they could confidently rely.

**Verse 48. *All men will believe on him***— If we permit him to work but a few more miracles like these two last (the cure of the blind man, and the resurrection of Lazarus) he will be universally acknowledged for the Messiah; the people will proclaim him king; and the Romans, who can suffer no government here but their own, will be so irritated that they will send their armies against us, and destroy our temple, and utterly dissolve our civil and ecclesiastical existence. Thus, under the pretense of the public



good, these men of blood hide their hatred against Christ, and resolve to put him to death. To get the people on their side, they must give the alarm of destruction to the nation: if this man be permitted to live, we shall be all destroyed! Their former weapons will not now avail. On the subject of keeping the Sabbath, they had been already confounded; and his last miracles were so incontestable that they could no longer cry out, He is a deceiver.

***Both our place and nation***.— Literally, this place, **τον τοπον**: but that the temple only is understood is dear from Acts 6:13, 14; 2 Macc. 1:14; 2:18; 3:18; 5:16, 17; 10:7; where it is uniformly called the place, or the holy place, because they considered it the most glorious and excellent place in the world. When men act in opposition to God's counsel, the very evils which they expect thereby to avoid will come upon them. They said, If we do not put Jesus to death, the Romans will destroy both our temple and nation. Now, it was because they put him to death that the Romans burnt and razed their temple to the ground, and put a final period to their political existence. See Matthew 22:7; and the notes on chap. 24.

**Verse 49. *Caiaphas being the high priest that same year***— By the law of Moses, Exodus 40:15, the office of high priest was for life, and the son of Aaron's race always succeeded his father, But at this time the high priesthood was almost annual: the Romans and Herod put down and raised up whom they pleased, and when they pleased, without attending to any other rule than merely that the person put in this office should be of the sacerdotal race. According to Josephus, Ant. xviii. c. 3, the proper name of this person was Joseph, and Caiaphas was his surname. He possessed the high priesthood for eight or nine years, and was deposed by Vitellius, governor of Judea. See on Luke 3:2.

***Ye know nothing***— Of the perilous state in which ye stand.

**Verse 50. *Nor consider***— Ye talk more at random than according to reason, and the exigencies of the case. There is a various reading here in some MSS. that should be noticed. Instead of **ουδε διαλογιζεσθε**, which we translate, ye do not consider, and which properly conveys the idea of conferring, or talking together, **ουδε λογιζεσθε**, neither do ye reason or consider rightly, is the reading of ABDL, three others, and some of the primitive fathers. Griesbach, by placing it in his inner margin, shows that

he thinks it bids fair to be the true reading. Dr. White thinks that this reading is equal, and probably preferable, to that in the text: *Lectio aequalis, forsitan praeferenda receptae.*

***That one man should die for the people***— In saying these remarkable words, Caiaphas had no other intention than merely to state that it was better to put Jesus to death than to expose the whole nation to ruin on his account. His maxim was, it is better to sacrifice one man than a whole nation. In politics nothing could be more just than this; but there are two words to be spoken to it: First, The religion of God says, we must not do evil that good may come: Romans 3:8. Secondly, It is not certain that Christ will be acknowledged as king by all the people; nor that he will make any insurrection against the Romans; nor that the Romans will, on his account, ruin the temple, the city, and the nation. This Caiaphas should have considered. A person should be always sure of his premises before he attempts to draw any conclusion from them. See Calmet. This saying was proverbial among the Jews: see several instances of it in Schoettgen.

**Verse 51. *This spake he not of himself***— Wicked and worthless as he was, God so guided his tongue that, contrary to his intention, he pronounced a prophecy of the death of Jesus Christ.

I have already remarked that the doctrine of a vicarious atonement had gained, long before this time, universal credit in the world. Words similar to these of Caiaphas are, by the prince of all the Roman poets, put in the mouth of Neptune, when promising Venus that the fleet of AENEAS should be preserved, and his whole crew should be saved, one only excepted, whose death he speaks of in these remarkable words: —

“Unum pro multis dabitur caput.”

“One life shall fall, that many may be saved.”

Which victim the poet informs us was Palinurus, the pilot of AENEAS’s own ship, who was precipitated into the deep by a Divine influence. See VIRG. AEn. v. l. 815, etc.

There was no necessity for the poet to have introduced this account. It was no historic fact, nor indeed does it tend to decorate the poem. It even pains the reader’s mind; for, after suffering so much in the sufferings of the

pious hero and his crew, he is at once relieved by the interposition of a god, who promises to allay the storm, disperse the clouds, preserve the fleet, and the lives of the men; but,—one must perish! The reader is again distressed, and the book ominously closes with the death of the generous Palinurus, who strove to the last to be faithful to his trust, and to preserve the life of his master and his friend. Why then did the poet introduce this? Merely, as it appears to me, to have the opportunity of showing in a few words his religious creed, on one of the most important doctrines in the world; and which the sacrificial system of Jews and Gentiles proves that all the nations of the earth credited.

As Caiaphas was high priest, his opinion was of most weight with the council; therefore God put these words in his mouth rather than into the mouth of any other of its members. It was a maxim among the Jews that no prophet ever knew the purport of his own prophecy, Moses and Isaiah excepted. They were in general organs by which God chose to speak.

**Verse 52.** *And not for that nation only*, etc.— These, and the preceding words in John 11:51, are John's explication of what was prophetic in the words of Caiaphas: as if John had said, He is indeed to die for the sins of the Jewish nation, but not for theirs alone, but for the sins of the whole world: see his own words afterwards, 1 John 2:1, 2.

*Gather together in one*— That he should collect into one body;—form one Church out of the Jewish and Gentile believers.

*Children of God that were scattered abroad*.— Probably John only meant the Jews who were dispersed among all nations since the conquest of Judea by the Romans; and these are called the dispersed, John 7:35, and James 1:1; and it is because he refers to these only, that he terms them here, the children of God, which was an ancient character of the Jewish people: see Deuteronomy 32:5; Isaiah 43:6; 45:11; Jeremiah 32:1. Taking his words in this sense, then his meaning is this: that Christ was to die, not only for the then inhabitants of Judea, but for all the Jewish race wheresoever scattered; and that the consequence would be, that they should be all collected from their various dispersions, and made one body. This comports with the predictions of St. Paul: Romans 11:1-32. This probably is the sense of the passage; and though, according to this interpretation, the apostle may seem to confine the benefits of Christ's

death to the Jewish people only, yet we find from the passage already quoted from his first epistle, that his views of this subject were afterwards very much extended; and that he saw that Jesus Christ was not only a propitiation for their sins (the Jews) but for the sins of the whole world: see his 1st epistle, chap. 2. ver. 2. {1 John 2:2} All the truths of the Gospel were not revealed at once, even to the apostles themselves.

**Verse 53. *They took counsel together***— *συνεβουλευσαντο*, they were of one accord in the business, and had fully made up their minds on the subject; and they waited only for a proper opportunity to put him to death.

**Verse 54. *Walked no more openly***— *παρηρησια*, He did not go as before through the cities and villages, teaching, preaching, and healing the sick.

***Near to the wilderness***— Some MSS. add, of Samphourein, or Samphourim, or Saphurim.

***A city chilled Ephraim***— Various written in the MSS., Ephraim, Ephrem, Ephram, and Ephratha. This was a little village, situated in the neighborhood of Bethel; for the scripture, 2 Chronicles 13:19, and Josephus, War, b. iv. c. 8. s. 9, join them both together. Many believe that this city or village was the same with that mentioned, 1 Macc. 5:46; 2 Macc. 12:27. Joshua gave it to the tribe of Judah, Joshua 15:9; and Eusebius and Jerome say it was about twenty miles north of Jerusalem.

***And there continued***— Calmet says, following Toynard, that he stayed there two months, from the 24th of January till the 24th of March.

**Verse 55. *The Jews' passover was nigh at hand***— It is not necessary to suppose that this verse has any particular connection with the preceding. Most chronologists agree that our Lord spent at least two months in Ephraim. This was the last passover which our Lord attended; and it was at this one that he suffered death for the salvation of a lost world. As the passover was nigh, many of the inhabitants of Ephraim and its neighborhood went up to Jerusalem, some time (perhaps seven or eight days, for so much time was required to purify those who had touched the dead) before the feast, that they might purify themselves, and not eat the passover otherwise than prescribed in the law. Many of the country people, in the time of Hezekiah, committed a trespass by not attending to

this: see 2 Chronicles 30:18, 19. Those mentioned in the text wished to avoid this inconvenience.

**Verse 56. *Then sought they for Jesus***— Probably those of Ephraim, in whose company Christ is supposed to have departed for the feast, but, having stayed behind, perhaps at Jericho, or its vicinity, the others had not missed him till they came to the temple, and then inquired among each other whether he would not attend the feast. Or the persons mentioned in the text might have been the agents of the high priest, etc., and hearing that Christ had been at Ephraim, came and inquired among the people that came from that quarter, whether Jesus would not attend the festival, knowing that he was punctual in his attendance on all the Jewish solemnities.

**Verse 57. *Had given a commandment***— Had given order; *εντολην*, positive order, or injunction, and perhaps with a grievous penalty, that no one should keep the place of his residence a secret. This was their hour, and the power of darkness; and now they are fully determined to take away his life. The order here spoken of was given in consequence of the determination of the council, mentioned John 11:48-53.

CHRIST'S sympathy and tenderness, one of the principal subjects in this chapter, have already been particularly noted on John 11:33. His eternal power and Godhead are sufficiently manifested in the resurrection of Lazarus. The whole chapter abounds with great and important truths, delivered in language the most impressive and edifying. In the whole of our Lord's conduct in the affair of Lazarus and his sisters, we find majesty, humanity, friendship, and sublime devotion, blended in the most intimate manner, and illustrating each other by their respective splendor and excellence. In every act, in every word, we see GOD manifested in the FLESH:—Man in all the amiableness and charities of his nature; GOD in the plenitude of his power and goodness. How sublime is the lesson of instruction conveyed by the words, Jesus wept! The heart that feels them not must be in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, and consequently lost to every generous feeling.

On the quotation from Virgil, on the 50th verse, a learned friend has sent me the following lines.

My dear Sir,-I have observed that in one part of your Commentary you quote these words of Virgil, *Unum pro multis dabitur caput*; and you are of opinion that Virgil here recognizes the doctrine of atonement. There is a passage in Lucan where this doctrine is exhibited more clearly and fully. It is in the second book, v. 306. Cato, in a speech to Brutus, declares his intention of fighting under the standard of Pompey, and then expresses the following sentiment: —

*O utinam, coelique Deis Erebique liberet,  
Hoc caput in cunctas damnatum exponere poenas!  
Devotum hostiles Decium pressere catervae:  
Me geminae figant acies, me barbara telis  
Rheni turba petat: cunctis ego pervius hastis  
Excipiam medius totius vulnera belli.  
Hic redimat sanguis populos: hac caede luatur,  
Quidquid Romani meruerunt pendere mores.*

*O, were the gods contented with my fall,  
If Cato's life could answer for you all,  
Like the devoted Decius would I go,  
To force from either side the mortal blow,  
And for my country's sake wish to be thought her foe.  
To me, ye Romans, all your rage confine,  
To me, ye nations from the barbarous Rhine,  
Let all the wounds this war shall make be mine.  
Open my vital streams, and let them run;  
O, let the purple sacrifice atone,  
For all the ills offending Rome hath done!*

ROWE.

A little after, v. 377, Lucan portrays the character of Cato with a very masterly hand; but he applies expressions to a mortal which are applicable to Christ alone.

*Uni quippe vacat, studiisque odiisque carenti,  
Humanum lugere genus.*

*The golden mean unchanging to pursue;  
Constant to keep the purposed end in view;  
Religiously to follow nature's laws;  
And die with pleasure in his country's cause,  
To think he was not for himself design'd,  
But born to be of use to all mankind.*

ROWE.



## CHAPTER 12.

*Jesus sups at the house of Lazarus, and Mary anoints his feet, 1-3. Judas Iscariot finds fault, and reproves her, 4-6. Jesus vindicates Mary and reproves Judas, 7, 8. The chief priests consult to put Lazarus to death, because that through him many believed on Jesus, 9-11. He enters Jerusalem in triumph; the people meet him, and the Pharisees are troubled, 12-19. Greeks inquire after Jesus, 20-22. Our Lord's discourse on the subject, 23-26. Speaks of his passion, and is answered by a voice from heaven, 27, 28. The people are astonished at the voice, and Jesus explains it to them, and foretells his death, 29-33. They question him concerning the perpetuity of the Messiah, and he instructs them, 34-36. Many believe not; and in them the saying of Isaiah is fulfilled, 37-41. Some of the chief rulers believe, but are afraid to confess him, 42, 43. He proclaims himself the light of the world, and shows the danger of rejecting his words, 44-50.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12.

**Verse 1. *Six days before the Passover***— Reckoning the day of the Passover to be the last of the six. Our Lord came on our Sabbath, the first day of the Jewish week, to Bethany, where he supped; and on the next day he made his public entry into Jerusalem: John 12:12. Calmet thinks that this was about two months after the resurrection of Lazarus, on the 9th of Nisan, (March 29,) in the thirty-sixth year of our Lord's age. It has been observed before—that Calmet adds three years to the common account.

**Verse 3. *Then took Mary a pound of ointment***— See the note on Matthew 26:7; see also Mark 14:3. It does not seem the most likely that this was the same transaction with that mentioned above. Some think that this was, notwithstanding that before is said to have been at the house of Simon the leper. The arguments, pro and con, are largely stated in the notes at the end of Matthew 26, {Matthew 26:75} to which I beg leave to refer the reader.



**Verse 5. *Three hundred pence***— Or denarii: about 9ú. 13s. 9d. of our money; reckoning the denarius at  $7 \frac{3}{4}d$ . One of my MSS. of the Vulgate (a MS. of the 14th century) reads, cccc denarii.

**Verse 6. *Not that HE cared for the poor***— There should be a particular emphasis laid on the word he, as the evangelist studies to show the most determined detestation to his conduct.

***And bare what was put therein.***— Or rather, as some eminent critics contend, And stole what was put in it. This seems the proper meaning of **εβασταζεν**; and in this sense it is used, John 20:15: If thou hast **STOLEN** him away-**ει συ εβαστασας αυτον**. In the same sense the word is used by Josephus, Ant. b. xii. c. 5, s 4; where speaking of the pillage of the temple by Antiochus, he says, **τα σκευη του θεου βαστασαι**, He carried off, or **STOLE**, also the vessels of the Lord. See also Ant. b. viii. c. 2, s. 2, where the harlot says before Solomon, concerning her child, **βαστασασα δε τουμον εκ των γονατων προς αυτην μεταφερει**-She **STOLE** away my child out of my bosom, and removed it to herself. And Ibid. b. ix. c. 4, s. 5, speaking of the ten lepers that went into the Syrian camp, he says, finding the Syrians fled, They entered into the camp, and ate, and drank; and, having **STOLEN** away (**εβαστασαν**) garments, and much gold, they hid them without the camp. See the objections to this translation answered by Kypke, and the translation itself vindicated. See also Pearce in loc., Wakefield, Toup. Em. ad Suid. p. iii. p. 203. If stealing were not intended by the evangelist, the word itself must be considered as superfluous; for, when we are told that he had the bag, we need not be informed that he had what was in it. But the apostle says he was a thief; and because he was a thief, and had the common purse in his power, therefore he stole as much as he conveniently could, without subjecting himself to detection. And, as he saw that the death of Christ was at hand, he wished to secure a provision for himself, before he left the company of the apostles. I see that several copies of the old Itala version understood the word in this sense, and therefore have translated the word by auferebat, exportabat—took away, carried away. Jerome, who professed to mend this version, has in this place (as well as in many others) marred is, by rendering **εβασταζεν**, by portabat.

The *γλωσσοκομον*, which we translate bag, meant originally the little box, or sheath, in which the tongues or reeds used for pipes were carried; and thus it is interpreted by Pollux in his *Onomasticon*; and this is agreeable to the etymology of the word. The Greek word is used in Hebrew letters by the Talmudists to signify a purse, scrip, chest, coffer, etc. As our Lord and his disciples lived on charity, a bag or scrip was provided to carry those pious donations by which they were supported. And Judas was steward and treasurer to this holy company.

**Verse 7. *Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.***— Several MSS. and versions read thus: *-αφεξ αυτην, ινα εις την ημεραντου ενταφιασμου μου τηρηση*—Let her alone, THAT she may keep it to the day of my embalming. This is the reading of BDLQ, four others, Arabic, Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, later Syriac in the margin, Slavonic, Vulgate, all the Itala but one; Nonnus, Ambrosius, Gaudentius, and Augustin. This reading, which has the approbation of Mill, Bengel, Griesbach, Pearce, and others, intimates that only a part of the ointment was then used, and that the rest was kept till the time that the women came to embalm the body of Jesus: Luke 24:1. See the notes on Matthew 26:12, 13.

**Verse 9. *Much people of the Jews***— John, who was a Galilean, often gives the title of Jews to those who were inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**Verse 10. *Consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death.***— As long as he lived they saw an incontestable proof of the Divine power of Christ; therefore they wished to put him to death, because many of the Jews, who came to see him through curiosity, became converts to Christ through his testimony. How blind were these men not to perceive that he who had raised him, after he had been dead four days, could raise him again though they had slain him a thousand times?

**Verse 12. *On the next day***— On what we call Monday.

**Verse 13. *Took branches***— See on Matthew 21:1, etc., and Mark 11:1-6, where this transaction is largely explained.

**Verse 16. *Then remembered they***, etc.— After the ascension of Christ, the disciples saw the meaning of many prophecies which referred to Christ, and applied them to him, which they had not fully comprehended before.

Indeed it is only in the light of the new covenant, that the old is to be fully understood.

**Verse 17. *When he called***— It appears that these people, who had seen him raise Lazarus from the dead, were publishing abroad the miracle, which increased the popularity of Christ, and the envy of the Pharisees.

**Verse 19. *Ye prevail nothing***— Either by your threatening or excommunications.

***The world is gone after him.***— The whole mass of the people are becoming his disciples. This is a very common form of expression among the Jews, and simply answers to the French, *tout le monde*, and to the English, every body—the bulk of the people. Many MSS., versions, and fathers, add *ολος*, the WHOLE world. As our Lord's converts were rapidly increasing, the Pharisees thought it necessary to execute without delay what they had purposed at their first council. See John 11:53.

**Verse 20. *Certain Greeks***— There are three opinions concerning these: 1. That they were proselytes of the gate or covenant, who came up to worship the true God at this feast. 2. That they were real Jews, who lived in Grecian provinces, and spoke the Greek language. 3. That they were mere Gentiles, who never knew the true God: and hearing of the fame of the temple, or the miracles of our Lord, came to offer sacrifices to Jehovah, and to worship him according to the manner of the people of that land. This was not an unfrequent case: many of the Gentiles, Romans, and others, were in the habit of sending sacrifices to the temple at Jerusalem. Of these opinions the reader may choose; but the first seems best founded.

**Verse 21. *The same came therefore to Philip***— Some suppose that these Gentiles were of Phoenicia or Syria, or perhaps inhabitants of Decapolis, near to the lake of Gennesareth and Bethsaida; and therefore they addressed themselves to Philip, who was of the latter city, and probably known to them. The later Syriac calls them Arameans or Syrians. The Vulgate, and several copies of the Itala, call them Gentiles.

***Sir, we would see Jesus.***— We have heard much concerning him, and we wish to see the person of whom we have heard such strange things. The final salvation of the soul often originates, under God, in a principle of simple curiosity. Many have only wished to see or hear a man who speaks

much of Jesus, his miracles, and his mercies; and in hearing have felt the powers of the world to come, and have become genuine converts to the truths of the Gospel.

**Verse 22. *Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.***— How pleasing to God is this union, when the ministers of his Gospel agree and unite together to bring souls to Christ. But where self-love prevails, and the honor that comes from God is not sought, this union never exists. Bigotry often ruins every generous sentiment among the different denominations of the people of God.

**Verse 23. *The hour is come, that the Son of man,*** etc.— The time is just at hand in which the Gospel shall be preached to all nations, the middle wall of partition broken down, and Jews and Gentiles united in one fold. But this could not be till after his death and resurrection, as the succeeding verse teaches. The disciples were the first fruits of the Jews; these Greeks, the first fruits of the Gentiles.

**Verse 24. *Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die***— Our Lord compares himself to a grain of wheat; his death, to a grain sown and decomposed in the ground; his resurrection, to the blade which springs up from the dead grain; which grain, thus dying, brings forth an abundance of fruit. I must die to be glorified; and, unless I am glorified, I can not establish a glorious Church of Jews and Gentiles upon earth. In comparing himself thus to a grain of wheat, our Lord shows us: —

1. The cause of his death—the order of God, who had rated the redemption of the world at this price; as in nature he had attached the multiplication of the corn to the death or decomposition of the grain.
2. The end of his death—the redemption of a lost world; the justification, sanctification, and glorification of men: as the multiplication of the corn is the end for which the grain is sown and dies.
3. The mystery of his death, which we must credit without being able fully to comprehend, as we believe the dead grain multiplies itself, and we are nourished by that multiplication, without being able to comprehend how it is done. The greatest philosopher that ever existed could not tell how one grain became thirty, sixty, a hundred, or a thousand—how it vegetated in the earth—how earth, air, and water, its component parts, could assume such a

form and consistence, emit such odours, or produce such tastes. Nor can the wisest man on earth tell how the bodies of animals are nourished by this produce of the ground; how wheat, for instance, is assimilated to the very nature of the bodies that receive it, and how it becomes flesh and blood, nerves, sinews, bones, etc. All we can say is, the thing is so; and it has pleased God that it should be so, and not otherwise. So there are many things in the person, death, and sacrifice of Christ, which we can neither explain nor comprehend. All we should say here is, It is by this means that the world was redeemed—through this sacrifice men are saved: it has pleased God that it should be so, and not otherwise. Some say: “Our Lord spoke this according to the philosophy of those days, which was by no means correct.” But, I would ask, has ever a more correct philosophy on this point appeared? Is it not a physical truth that the whole body of the grain dies, is converted into fine earth, which forms the first nourishment of the embryo plant, and prepares it to receive a grosser support from the surrounding soil; and that nothing lives but the germ, which was included in this body, and which must die also, if it did not receive, from the death or putrefaction of the body of the grain, nourishment, so as to enable it to unfold itself? Though the body of our Lord died, there was still the germ, the quickening power of the Divinity, which re-animated that body, and stamped the atonement with infinite merit. Thus the merit was multiplied; and, through the death of that one person, the man Christ Jesus united to the eternal WORD, salvation was procured for the whole world. Never was a simile more appropriate, nor an illustration more happy or successful.

**Verse 25. *He that loveth his life***— See on Matthew 10:39; Luke 14:26. I am about to give up my life for the salvation of men; but I shall speedily receive it back with everlasting honor, by my resurrection from the dead. In this I should be imitated by my disciples, who should, when called to it, lay down their lives for the truth; and, if they do, they shall receive them again with everlasting honor.

**Verse 26. *If any man serve me***— Christ is a master in a twofold sense: 1. To instruct men. 2. To employ and appoint them their work. He who wishes to serve Christ must become: 1. His disciple or scholar, that he may be taught: 2. His servant, that he may be employed by and obey his master. To such a person a twofold promise is given: 1. He shall be with Christ, in eternal fellowship with him; and 2. He shall be honored by the

Lord: he shall have an abundant recompense in glory; but how great, eye hath not seen, ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

How similar to this is the saying of Creeshna (an incarnation of the supreme God, according to the Hindoo theology) to his disciple Arjoon! “If one whose ways were ever so evil serve me alone, he soon becometh of a virtuous spirit, is as respectable as the just man, and obtaineth eternal happiness. Consider this world as a finite and joyless place, and serve me. Be of my mind, my servant, my adorer, and bow down before me. Unite thy soul unto me, make me thy asylum, and thou shalt go unto me.” And again: “I am extremely dear to the wise man, and he is dear to me—I esteem the wise man even as myself, because his devout spirit dependeth upon me alone as his ultimate resource.” Bhagvat Geeta, pp. 71 and 82.

The rabbins have an extravagant saying, viz. “God is more concerned for the honor of the just man than for his own.”

**Verse 27. *Now is my soul troubled***— Our blessed Lord took upon him our weaknesses, that he might sanctify them to us. As a man he was troubled at the prospect of a violent death. Nature abhors death: God has implanted that abhorrence in nature, that it might become a principle of self preservation; and it is to this that we owe all that prudence and caution by which we avoid danger. When we see Jesus working miracles which demonstrate his omnipotence, we should be led to conclude that he was not man were it not for such passages as these. The reader must ever remember that it was essentially necessary that he should be man; for, without being such, he could not have died for the sin of the world.

***And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour***— **και τι ειπω; πατερ, σωσον με εκ της ωρας ταυτης**; which may be paraphrased thus: And why should I say, Father, save me from this hour? when for this cause I am come to this hour. The common version makes our blessed Lord contradict himself here, by not attending to the proper punctuation of the passage, and by translating the particle **τι** what, instead of why or how. The sense of our Lord’s words is this: “When a man feels a fear of a sudden or violent death, it is natural to him to cry out, Father, save me from this death! for he hopes that the glory of God and his welfare may be accomplished some other way, less dreadful to his nature: but why should

I say so, seeing for this very purpose, that I might die this violent death for the sins of mankind, I am come into the world, and have almost arrived at the hour of my crucifixion.”

**Verse 28. *Father, glorify thy name.***— By the name of God is to be understood himself, in all his attributes: his wisdom, truth, mercy, justice, holiness, etc., which were all more abundantly glorified by Christ’s death and resurrection, (i.e. shown forth in their own excellence,) than they had ever been before. Christ teaches here a lesson of submission to the Divine will. Do with me what thou wilt, so that glory may redound to thy name. Some MSS. read, Father, glorify my name: others, glorify thy Son.

***Then came there a voice from heaven,*** etc.— The following is a literal translation of Calmet’s note on this passage, which he has taken from Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, and others: “I have accomplished my eternal designs on thee. I have sent thee into the world to make an atonement for the sin of the world, and to satisfy my offended justice. I will finish my work. Thou shalt shed thy blood upon the cross. My glory is interested in the consummation of thy sacrifice. But, in procuring my own glory, I shall procure thine. Thy life and thy death glorify me: I have glorified thee by the miracles which have accompanied thy mission; and I will continue to glorify thee at thy death, by unexampled prodigies, and thy resurrection shall be the completion of thy glory and of thy elevation.”

Christ was glorified: 1st. By the prodigies which happened at his death. 2. In his resurrection. 3. In his ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God. 4. In the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles. and 5. In the astonishing success with which the Gospel was accompanied, and by which the kingdom of Christ has been established in the world. 2 Corinthians 2:14.

**Verse 29. *The people said that it thundered: others-an angel spake to him.***— Bishop Pearce says, Probably there was thunder as well as a voice, as in Exodus 19:16, 17, and some persons, who were at a small distance, might hear the thunder without hearing the voice; while others heard the voice too; and these last said, “An angel hath spoken to him.”

Wetstein supposes that the voice was in the language then in use among the Jews; which the Greeks, not understanding, took for thunder; the

others, the Jews, who did understand it, said it was the voice of an angel. In Revelation 6:1, the voice of one of the living creatures is compared to thunder; and in Revelation 10:3, the voice of an angel is compared to seven thunders. The voice mentioned was probably very loud, which some heard distinctly, others indistinctly; hence the variety of opinion.

**Verse 30.** *This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.*—

Probably meaning those Greeks who had been brought to him by Philip and Andrew. The Jews had frequent opportunities of seeing his miracles, and of being convinced that he was the Messiah; but these Greeks, who were to be a first fruits of the Gentiles, had never any such opportunity. For their sakes, therefore, to confirm them in the faith, this miraculous voice appears to have come from heaven.

**Verse 31.** *Now is the judgment of this world*— The judgment spoken of in this place is applied by some to the punishment which was about to fall on the Jewish people for rejecting Christ. And the ruler or prince, ο αρχων, of this world, is understood to be Satan, who had blinded the eyes of the Jews, and hardened their hearts, that they might not believe on the Son of God; but his kingdom, not only among the Jews, but in all the world, was about to be destroyed by the abolition of idolatry and the vocation of the Gentiles.

The epithet סר העולם sar ha-olam, prince of this world, is repeatedly applied to the devil, or to Samael, who is termed the angel of death. The Jews fabled that, into the hands of this chief, God had delivered all the nations of the earth, except the Israelites. See Lightfoot. The words are understood by others as addressed to these believing Greeks, and to have the following meaning, which is extremely different from the other. “In a short time (four or five days afterwards) ye shall see what sort of a judgment this world passes. I, who am its ruler and prince, shall be cast out, shall be condemned by my own creatures, as an impious and wicked person. But do not be discouraged: though I be lifted up on the cross, and die like a malefactor, nevertheless I will draw all men unto myself. The Gospel of Christ crucified shall be the grand agent, in the hand of the Most High, of the conversion and salvation of a ruined world.” But see on John 14:30; 16:11.



**Verse 32. *I-will draw all men unto me.***— After I shall have died and risen again, by the preaching of my word and the influence of my Spirit, I shall attract and illuminate both Jews and Gentiles. It was one of the peculiar characteristics of the Messiah, that unto him should the gathering of the people be, Genesis 49:10. And probably our Lord refers to the prophecy, Isaiah 11:10, which peculiarly belonged to the Gentiles: “There shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ENSIGN of the people, to it shall the GENTILES seek, and his rest shall be glorious.” There is an allusion here to the ensigns or colors of commanders of regiments, elevated on high places, on long poles, that the people might see where the pavilion of their general was, and so flock to his standard.

Instead of **παντας**, the Codex Bezae, another, several versions, and many of the fathers, read **παντα**, all men, or all things: so the Anglo-Saxon, (Anglo-Saxon), I will draw all things to myself. But **παντα** may be here the accusative singular, and signify all men.

The ancients fabled that Jupiter had a chain of gold, which he could at any time let down from heaven, and by it draw the earth and all its inhabitants to himself. See a fine passage to this effect in Homer, Iliad viii. ver. 18-27.

ειδ' αγε πειρησασθε θεοι, ινα ειδετε παντες,  
σειρην χρυσειην εξ ουρανοθεν κρεμασαντες'  
παντες δ' εξαπτεσθε θεοι, πασαι τε θεαιναι. κ. τ. λ.

*“Now prove me: let ye down the golden chain  
From heaven, and pull at its inferior links,  
Both goddesses and gods: but me your king,  
Supreme in wisdom, ye shall never draw  
To earth from heaven, strive with me as ye may.  
But I, if willing to exert my power,  
The earth itself, itself the sea, and you,  
Will lift with ease together, and will wind  
The chain around the spiry summit sharp  
Of the Olympian, that all things upheaved  
Shall hang in the mid heaven. So much am I,  
Alone, superior both to gods and men.*

**COWPER.**

By this chain the poets pointed out the union between heaven and earth; or, in other words, the government of the universe by the extensive chain of causes and effects. It was termed golden, to point out, not only the

beneficence of the Divine Providence, but also that infinite philanthropy of God by which he influences and by which he attracts all mankind to himself. It was possibly in allusion to this that our Lord spoke the above words. Should it be objected that it is inconsistent with the gravity of the subject, and the dignity of our Lord, to allude to the fable of a heathen poet, I answer: 1. The moral is excellent, and, applied to this purpose, expresses beautifully our Lord's gracious design in dying for the world, viz. That men might be united to himself, and drawn up into heaven. 2. It is no more inconsistent with the gravity of the subject, and his dignity, for our blessed Lord to allude to Homer, than it was for St. Paul to quote Aratus and Cleanthes, Acts 17:28, and Epimenides, Titus 1:12; for he spoke by the same Spirit.

So justice was sometimes represented under the emblem of a golden chain, and in some cases such a chain was constructed, one end attached to the emperor's apartment, and the other hanging within reach; that if any person were oppressed he might come and lay hold on the chain, and by shaking it give the king notice that he was oppressed, and thus claim protection from the fountain of justice and power. In the Jehangeer Nameh, a curious account of this kind is given, which is as follows. The first order which Jehangeer issued on his accession to the throne (which was A.H. 1014, answering to A.D. 1605) was for the construction of the GOLDEN CHAIN of Justice. It was made of pure gold, and measured thirty yards in length, consisting of sixty links, and weighing, in the whole, four Hindostany maunds (about four hundred pounds avoirdupois.) One end of the chain was suspended from the royal bastion of the fortress of Agra, and the other fastened in the ground near the side of the river. The intention of this was, that if the officers of the courts of law were partial in their decisions, or dilatory in the administration of justice, the injured parties might come themselves to this chain, and, making a noise by shaking the links of it, give notice that they were waiting to represent their grievances to his majesty. Hist. of Hindostan, p. 96, Calcutta, 1788. Such a communication, prayer and faith establish between the most just and most merciful GOD, and the wretched and oppressed children of men. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come! Psalm 65:2.

**Verse 34. *We have heard out of the law***— That is, out of the sacred writings. The words here are quoted from Psalm 110:4; but the Jews called every part of the sacred writings by the name, The Law, in opposition to the words or sayings of the scribes. See on John 10:34.

***That Christ abideth for ever***— There was no part of the law nor of the Scripture that said the Messiah should not die; but there are several passages that say as expressly as they can that Christ must die, and die for the sin of the world too. See especially Isaiah 53:1, etc.; Daniel 9:24, 27. But as there were several passages that spoke of the perpetuity of his reign, as Isaiah 9:7; Ezekiel 37:25; Daniel 7:14, they probably confounded the one with the other, and thus drew the conclusion, The Messiah cannot die; for the Scripture hath said, his throne, kingdom, and reign shall be eternal. The prophets, as well as the evangelists and apostles, speak sometimes of the Divine, sometimes of the human nature of Christ: when they speak of the former, they show forth its glory, excellence, omnipotence, omniscience, and eternity; when they speak of the latter, they show forth its humiliations, afflictions, sufferings, and death. And those who do not make the proper distinction between the two natures of Christ, the human and the Divine, will ever make blunders as well as the Jews. It is only on the ground of two natures in Christ that the Scriptures which speak of him, either in the Old or New Testament, can be possibly understood. No position in the Gospel is plainer than this, God was manifest in the flesh.

**Verse 35. *Yet a little while is the light with you***.— In answer to their objection, our Lord compares himself to a light, which was about to disappear for a short time, and afterwards to shine forth with more abundant lustre; but not to their comfort, if they continued to reject its present beamings. He exhorts them to follow this light while it was among them. The Christ shall abide for ever, it is true; but he will not always be visible. When he shall depart from you, ye shall be left in the thickest darkness; in impenitence and hardness of heart. Then shall ye wish to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it, Luke 17:22. Then shall ye seek me, but shall not find me, John 7:34. For the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to the Gentiles, Matthew 21:43. If ye believe not in me now, ye shall then wish ye had done it, when wishing shall be for ever fruitless.

Instead of μεθ' υμων, with you, εν υμιν, among you, is the reading of BDL, seventeen others; Coptic, Gothic, Slavonic, Vulgate, Itala; Cyril, Nonnus, and Victorinus. Griesbach has received it into the text. The meaning of both is nearly the same.

***Lest darkness come upon you***— Ye have a good part of your journey yet to go: ye cannot travel safely but in the daylight—that light is almost gone—run, that the darkness overtake you not, or in it ye shall stumble, fall, and perish!

Reader, is thy journey near an end? There may be but a very little time remaining to thee. O, run, fly to Christ, lest the darkness of death overtake thee, before thy soul have found redemption in his blood!

**Verse 36. *Children of light***— Let the light, the truth of Christ, so dwell in and work by you that ye may be all light in the Lord: that as truly as a child is the produce of his own parent, and partakes of his nature, so ye may be children of the light, having nothing in you but truth and righteousness.

***Did hide himself from them.***— Either by rendering himself invisible, or by suddenly mingling with the crowd, so that they could not perceive him. See John 8:59. Probably it means no more than that he withdrew from them, and went to Bethany, as was his custom a little before his crucifixion; and concealed himself there during the night, and taught publicly every day in the temple. It was in the night season that they endeavored to seize upon him, in the absence of the multitude.

**Verse 37. *Yet they believed not on him***— Though the miracles were wrought for this very purpose, that they might believe in Christ, and escape the coming wrath, and every evidence given that Jesus was the Messiah, yet they did not believe; but they were blinded by their passions, and obstinately hardened their hearts against the truth.

**Verse 38. *That the saying of Esaias***— Or, Thus the word of Isaiah was fulfilled. So I think *υα* (commonly rendered that) should be translated. For it certainly does not mean the end the Pharisees had in view by not believing; nor the end which the prophet had in view in predicting the incredulity of the Jews; but simply, such a thing was spoken by the

prophet, concerning the Jews of his own time, and it had its literal fulfillment in those of our Lord's time.

***Our report***— The testimony of the prophets, concerning the person, office, sufferings, death, and sacrifice of the Messiah. See Isaiah 53:1, etc.

***The arm of the Lord***— The power, strength, and miracles of Christ.

**Verse 39. *Therefore they could not believe***— Why? Because they did not believe the report of the prophets concerning Christ; therefore they credited not the miracles which he wrought as a proof that he was the person foretold by the prophets, and promised to their fathers. Having thus resisted the report of the prophets, and the evidence of Christ's own miracles, God gave them up to the darkness and hardness of their own hearts, so that they continued to reject every overture of Divine mercy; and God refused to heal their national wound, but, on the contrary, commissioned the Romans against them, so that their political existence was totally destroyed.

The prophecy of Isaiah was neither the cause nor the motive of their unbelief: it was a simple prediction, which imposed no necessity on them to resist the offers of mercy. They might have believed, notwithstanding the prediction, for such kinds of prophecies always include a tacit condition; they may believe, if they properly use the light and power which God has given them. Such prophecies also are of a general application—they will always suit somebody, for in every age persons will be found who resist the grace and Spirit of God like these disobedient Jews. However, it appears that this prediction belonged especially to these rejecters and crucifiers of Christ; and if the prophecy was infallible in its execution, with respect to them, it was not because of the prediction that they continued in unbelief, but because of their own voluntary obstinacy; and God foreseeing this, foretold it by the prophet. Should I say that, they could not believe, means, they would not believe, I should perhaps offend a generation of his children; and yet I am pretty certain the words should be so understood. However, that I may put myself under cover from all suspicion of perverting the meaning of a text which seems to some to be spoken in favor of that awful doctrine of unconditional reprobation, the very father of it shall interpret the text for me. Thus then saith St. AUGUSTIN: Quare autem non POTERANT, si a me quaeratur, cito respondeo;

Quia NOLEBANT: MALAM quippe eorum VOLUNTATEM praevidit Deus, et per prophetam praenunciavit. “If I be asked why they COULD not believe? I immediately answer, Because THEY WOULD NOT. And God, having foreseen their BAD WILL, foretold it by the prophet.” Aug. Tract. 53, in Joan.

**Verse 40. *And I should heal them.***— This verse is taken from Isaiah 6:9, and, perhaps, refers more to the judgments that should fall upon them as a nation, which God was determined should not be averted, than it does to their eternal state. To suppose that the text meant that God was unwilling that they should turn unto him, lest he should be obliged to save them, is an insupportable blasphemy.

**Verse 41. *When he saw his glory***— Isaiah 6:1, etc. I saw Jehovah, said the prophet, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah, God of hosts; the whole earth shall be full of his glory! It appears evident, from this passage, that the glory which the prophet saw was the glory of Jehovah: John, therefore, saying here that it was the glory of Jesus, shows that he considered Jesus to be Jehovah. See Bishop Pearce. Two MSS. and a few versions have **θεου**, and **του θεου αυτου**, the glory of God, or of his God.

**Verse 42. *Among the chief rulers-many believed on him***— We only know the names of two of them, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea.

***But-they did not confess him***— Or it: they were as yet weak in the faith, and could not bear the reproach of the cross of Christ. Besides, the principal rulers had determined to excommunicate every person who acknowledged Christ for the Messiah; see John 9:22.

**Verse 43. *They loved the praise of men***— **δοξαν**, the glory or honor that cometh from men.

How common are these four obstacles of faith! says Quesnel: 1. Too great a regard to men. 2. Riches and temporal advantages. 3. The fear of disgrace. 4. The love of the praise of men. Abundance of persons persuade themselves that they love God more than the world, till some trying occasion fully convinces them of their mistake. It is a very great misfortune for a person not to know himself but by his falls; but it is the

greatest of all not to rise again after he has fallen. This is generally occasioned by the love of the praise of men, because in their account it is more shameful to rise again than it was to fall at first.

**Verse 44. *Jesus cried and said***— This is our Lord's concluding discourse to this wicked people: probably this and the following verses should be understood as a part of the discourse which was left off at the 36th verse. {John 12:36}

Jesus cried—he spoke these words aloud, and showed his earnest desire for their salvation.

***Believeth not on me, (only,) but on him that sent me.***— Here he asserts again his indivisible unity with the Father:—he who believes on the Son believes on the Father: he who hath seen the Son hath seen the Father: he who honors the Son honors the Father. Though it was for asserting this (his oneness with God) that they were going to crucify him, yet he retracts nothing of what he had spoken, but strongly reasserts it, in the very jaws of death!

**Verse 46. *I am come a light into the world***— Probably referring to what his forerunner had said, John 1:5. Before the coming of this Savior, this sun of righteousness, into the world, all was darkness: at his rising the darkness is dispersed; but it only profits those whose eyes are open to receive the rays of this sun of righteousness. See on John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5.

**Verse 47. *And believe not***— και μη φυλαξῆ, And keep them not, is the reading of ABL, seven others; Syriac, Wheelock's Persian, two of the Arabic, Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Armenian, later Syriac, Vulgate, six of the Itala, and some of the fathers.

A man must hear the words of Christ in order to believe them; and he must believe, in order to keep them; and he must keep them in order to his salvation.

***I judge him not***— I need not do it: the words of Moses and the prophets judge and condemn him. See the notes on John 3:17; 5:45.

**Verse 48. *The word that I have spoken shall judge him***— Ye shall be judged according to my doctrine: the maxims which ye have heard from my mouth shall be those on which ye shall be tried in the great day; and ye

shall be condemned or acquitted according as ye have believed or obeyed them, or according as ye have despised and violated them, See this proved, Matthew 25:35, etc.

**Verse 49. *For I have not spoken of myself***— I have not spoken for my secular interest: I have not aimed at making any gain of you: I have not set up myself as your teachers in general do, to be supported by my disciples, and to be credited on my own testimony. I have taught you, not the things of men, but the deep, everlasting truths of God. As his envoy, I came to you; and his truth only I proclaim.

***Gave me a commandment***— Or, commission. So I understand the original word, *εντολη*. Christ, as the Messiah, received his commission from God; what he should command—every thing that related to the formation and establishment of the Christian institution: and what he should speak—all his private conversations with his disciples or others, he, as man, commanded and spoke through the constant inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 50. *I know that this commandment is life everlasting***— These words of our Lord are similar to that saying in St. John's first epistle, 1 John 5:11, 12. This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life. God's commandment or commission is, Preach salvation to a lost world, and give thyself a ransom for all; and whosoever believeth on thee shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Every word of Christ, properly credited, and carefully applied, leads to peace and happiness here, and to glory hereafter. What an amiable view of the Gospel of the grace of God does this give us? It is a system of eternal life, Divinely calculated to answer every important purpose to dying, miserable man. This sacred truth Jesus witnessed with his last breath. He began his public ministry proclaiming the kingdom of God; and he now finishes it by asserting that the whole commission is eternal life; and, having attested this, he went out of the temple, and retired to Bethany.

THE public work of our Lord was now done; and the remnant of his time, previously to his crucifixion, he spent in teaching his disciples—instructing them in the nature of his kingdom, his intercession, and the mission of the Holy Spirit; and in that heavenly life which all true believers live with the Father, through faith in the Son, by the operation of the Holy Ghost.



Many persons are liberal in their condemnation of the Jews, because they did not believe on the Son of God; and doubtless their unbelief has merited and received the most signal punishment. But those who condemn them do not reflect that they are probably committing the same sort of transgression, in circumstances which heighten the iniquity of their sin. Will it avail any man, that he has believed that Christ has come in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil, who does not come unto him that he may have life, but continues to live under the power and guilt of sin? Paradoxical as it may seem, it is nevertheless possible, for a man to credit the four evangelists, and yet live and die an infidel, as far as his own salvation is concerned. Reader, it is possible to hold the truth in unrighteousness. Pray to God that this may not be thy condemnation. For a farther improvement of the principal subjects of this chapter, see the notes on verses 24, 32, and 39. {John 12:24, 32, 39}

## CHAPTER 13.

*Christ washes the feet of his disciples, and gives them instructions concerning humility and charity, 1-17. He tells them that one of themselves will betray him, 18-20. The disciples doubting of whom he spoke, Peter desires John to ask him, 21-25. Jesus shows that it is Judas Iscariot, 26. Satan enters into Judas, and he rises up and leaves the company, 27-30. Christ shows his approaching death, and commands his disciples to love one another, 31-35. Peter, professing strong attachment to Christ, is informed of his denial. 36-38.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 13.

**Verse 1.** *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew*, etc.— Or, as some translate, Now Jesus having known, before the feast of the passover, that his hour was come, etc. The supper mentioned in John 13:2 is supposed to have been that on the Thursday evening, when the feast of the passover began; and though, in our common translation, this passage seems to place the supper before that feast, yet, according to the amended translation, what is here said is consistent with what we read in the other evangelists. See Matthew 26:2; John 12:1.

*Having loved his own*— His disciples.

*Which were in the world*— Who were to continue longer in its troubles and difficulties.

*He loved them unto the end.*— Continued his fervent affection towards them to his latest breath, and gave them that convincing proof of it which is mentioned John 13:5. That the disciples alone are meant here every man must see.

**Verse 2.** *And supper being ended*— Rather, *δειπνου γενομενου*, while supper was preparing. To support this new translation of the words, it may be remarked that, from John 13:26, 30, it appears that the supper was not then ended: nay, it is probable that it was not then begun; because the

washing of feet (John 13:5) was usually practised by the Jews before they entered upon their meals, as may be gathered from Luke 7:44, and from the reason of the custom. I think that John wrote, not **γενομενου**, but **γινομενου**, as in BL. Cant. and Origen, which latter reading is approved by several eminent critics, and should be translated as above. By the supper I suppose to be meant, not only the eating of it, but the preparing and dressing of it, and doing all things necessary previously to the eating of it. The devil had, before this time of the supper, put it into Judas's heart to betray his Master. See Matthew 26:14, etc.; Mark 14:10, 11; and Luke 22:3, etc. See also Bishop Pearce, from whose judicious commentary the preceding notes are principally taken.

Calmet observes that John, designing only to supply what was omitted by the other evangelists, passes over all the transactions of the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, before the passion, and at once goes from Monday evening to Thursday evening. It is remarkable that St. John says nothing about the institution of the holy sacrament, which Matthew, Matthew 26:26, etc., Mark, Mark 14:22, etc., and Luke, Luke 22:19, etc., describe so particularly. No other reason can be assigned for this than that he found it completely done by the others, and that he only designed to supply their defects.

***The devil having now put it into the heart***— Judas formed his plot six days before this, on occasion of what happened at the house of Simon the leper: see Matthew 26:14. Calmet.

**Verse 3. *Knowing that the Father had given***, etc.— Our Lord, seeing himself almost at the end of his race, and being about to leave his apostles, thought it necessary to leave them a lesson of humility exemplified by himself, to deliver them from the bad influence of those false ideas which they formed concerning the nature of his kingdom. On all occasions previously to this, the disciples had shown too much attachment to worldly honors and dignities: if this ambition had not been removed, the consequences of it would have been dreadful in the establishment of the religion of Christ; as after his death, it would have divided and infallibly dispersed them. It was necessary therefore to restrain this dangerous passion, and to confirm by a remarkable example what he had so often told them,—that true greatness consisted in the depth of humility, and that those

who were the willing servants of all should be the highest in the account of God.

**Verse 4. *He riseth from supper***— Not from eating, as Bishop Pearce has well observed, but from his place at table; probably the dishes were not as yet laid down, though the guests were seated. According to the custom of the Jews and other Asiatics, this washing must have taken place before the supper. See on John 13:2.

***Laid aside his garments***— That is, his gown or upper coat, with the girdle wherewith it was girded close to his tunic or under coat; and, instead of this girdle, he tied a towel about him: 1. that he might appear in the character of a servant; and 2. that he might have it in readiness to dry their feet after he had washed them.

**Verse 5. *Poureth water into a bason***, etc.— This was the office of the meanest slaves. When David sent to Abigail, to inform her that he had chosen her for wife, she arose and said: Behold, let thy handmaid be a SERVANT, to WASH the FEET of the SERVANTS of my lord, 1 Samuel 25:41. Some of the ancients have supposed that our Lord began with washing the feet of Judas, to inspire him with sentiments of compunction and remorse, to melt him down with kindness, and to show all his disciples how they should act towards their enemies. Dr. Lightfoot supposes he washed the feet of Peter, James, and John only; but this is not likely: the verb *αρχεσθαι* in the sacred writings, signifies, not only to commence, but to finish an act, Acts 1:1; and in the Septuagint, Genesis 2:3. There is every reason to believe that he washed the feet of all the twelve. See on John 13:9.

**Verse 6. *Lord, dost THOU wash MY feet?***— Every word here is exceedingly emphatic. Peter had often seen the great humility of his Lord, but never saw his condescension so particularly marked as in this instance.

**Verse 7. *What I do thou knowest not now***, etc.— As if our Lord had said, Permit me to do it now, and I will shortly explain to you the nature of this action, and my motives for doing it.

***Thou shalt know hereafter***.— *μετα ταυτα*, after this business is finished. And so we find he explained the whole to them, as soon as he had finished the washing: see John 13:12-17. I cannot think that this refers to any

particular instruction received on this head after the day of pentecost, as some have conjectured.

**Verse 8.** *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*— Thou canst not be my disciple unless I wash thee. It is certain Christ did not mean to exclude him from the apostolic office, if he should persist, through the deepest reverence for his Master, to refuse to let him wash his feet: this act of his was emblematical of something spiritual; of something that concerned the salvation of Peter; and without which washing he could neither be an apostle or be finally saved; therefore our Lord said, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. There is a mystical washing by the blood of Christ, 1 John 1:7; and by his Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5, 6. It was the common custom of our Lord to pass from sensible and temporal things to those which were spiritual and eternal; and to take occasion from every thing that presented itself, to instruct his disciples, and to raise their souls to God. If the discourse was of bread, water, leaven, father, mother, riches, etc., he immediately changed the literal sense, and under the figure of these things, spoke of matters altogether spiritual and Divine. I have met with many good persons who have attempted to imitate our blessed Lord in this, but I never knew one to succeed in it. The reason is, it requires not only very deep piety, but sound sense, together with an accurate knowledge of the nature and properties of the subjects which, in this way, the person wishes to illustrate; and very few can be found who have such deep, philosophical knowledge as such cases require. The large folio which a good-intentioned man printed on the metaphors is, alas! a standing proof how little mere piety can do in matters of this kind, where the sciences, and especially practical philosophy, are totally wanting. Jesus Christ was a consummate philosopher: every subject appears grand and noble in his hands. See an ample proof in the preceding chapter, John 12:24.

**Verse 9.** *Lord, not my feet only,* etc.— It appears that Peter entered into our Lord's meaning, and saw that this was emblematical of a spiritual cleansing: therefore he wishes to be completely washed.

**Verse 10.** *He that is washed*— That is, he who has been in the bath, as probably all the apostles had lately been, in order to prepare themselves

the better for the paschal solemnity; for on that occasion, it was the custom of the Jews to bathe twice.

***Needeth not save to wash his feet***— To cleanse them from any dirt or dust that might have adhered to them, in consequence of walking from the bath to the place of supper. The washing, therefore, of the feet of such persons was all that was necessary, previously to their sitting down to table; The Hindoos walk home from bathing barefoot, and, on entering the house wash their feet again. To this custom our Lord evidently alludes.

If these last words of our Lord had any spiritual reference, it is not easy to say what it was. A common opinion is the following: He who is washed—who is justified through the blood of the Lamb, needeth only to wash his feet—to regulate all his affections and desires; and to get, by faith, his conscience cleansed from any fresh guilt, which he may have contracted since his justification.

***Ye are clean, but not all***— Eleven of you are upright and sincere; the twelfth is a traitor. So it appears he had washed the feet of all the twelve; but as no external ablutions can purify a hypocrite or a traitor, therefore Judas still remained unclean.

**Verse 12. *Know ye what I have done***— Our Lord had told Peter, in the presence of the rest, John 13:7, that he should afterwards know what was the intent and meaning of this washing; and now he begins to fulfill his promise; therefore I think it more likely that he gives a command, here, than asks a question, as he knew himself that they did not comprehend his design. On this account **γινώσκετε** might be translated in the imperative mood, CONSIDER what I have done.

**Verse 13. *Ye call me Master and Lord***— ὁ διδασκαλος και ο κυριος, similar to רַבִּי Rabbi, and מַר Mar, titles very common among the Jewish doctors, as may be seen in Schoettgen. This double title was not given except to the most accredited teachers, רַבִּי וְמוֹרֵי Rabbi vemore, my master, my lord!

**Verse 14. *Ye also ought to wash one another feet.***— That is, ye should be ready, after my example, to condescend to all the weakness of your

brethren; to be willing to do the meanest offices for them, and to prefer the least of them in honor to yourselves.

**Verse 16. *The servant is not greater than his lord***— Christ has ennobled the acts of humility by practising them himself. The true glory of a Christian consists in being, in his measure, as humble as his Lord.

***Neither he that is sent***— οὐδε αποστολος Nor an apostle. As I think these words were intended for the suppression of all worldly ambition and lordly conduct in the apostles and their successors in the ministry, therefore I think the original word αποστολος, should be translated apostle, rather than he that is sent, because the former rendering ascertains and determines the meaning better.

**Verse 17. *If ye know these things, happy***, etc.— True happiness consists in the knowledge of God, and in obedience to him. A man is not happy because he knows much; but because he receives much of the Divine nature, and is, in all his conduct, conformed to the Divine will. “They who have read many books (says Menu) are more exalted than such as have seldom studied; they who retain what they have read, than forgetful readers; they who fully understand, than such as only remember; and they who perform their known duty, than such as barely know it. Sacred knowledge and devotedness to God are the means by which a man can arrive at beatitude.” See Institutes of MENU, c. xii. Inst. 103, 104. For a heathen this saying is very remarkable.

**Verse 18. *I speak not of you all***— This is a continuation of that discourse which was left off at the tenth verse. The preceding verses may be read in a parenthesis.

***I know whom I have chosen***— I am not deceived in my choice; I perfectly foresaw every thing that has happened, or can happen. I have chosen Judas, not as a wicked man, nor that he should become such; but I plainly foresaw that he would abuse my bounty, give way to iniquity, deliver me into the hands of my enemies, and bring ruin upon himself.

***That the scripture may be fulfilled***— Or, thus the scripture is fulfilled. Christ applies to Judas what David had said of his rebellious son Absalom, Psalm 41:9, who was one of the most express emblems of this traitor. See on John 12:38, 39.

***He that eateth bread with me***— That is, he who was in habits of the utmost intimacy with me.

***Hath lifted up his heel***— An allusion to a restive, ill-natured horse, that sometimes kicks even the person who feeds and takes care of him.

**Verse 19. *That-ye may believe***— These frequent predictions of his death, so circumstantial in themselves, had the most direct tendency to confirm the disciples, not only in the belief of his being the Messiah, but also in that of his omniscience.

**Verse 20. *He that received whomsoever I send***— See similar words, Matthew 10:40, etc. Our Lord spoke this to comfort his disciples: he showed them that, although they should be rejected by many, they would be received by several; and that whoever received them should reap the utmost benefit by it.

**Verse 21. *Was troubled in spirit***.— See the note on John 11:33.

***And testified***— Spoke with great earnestness.

***Shall betray me.***— **παραδωσει με**, Will deliver me up. Judas had already betrayed our blessed Lord, and he was now on the point of delivering him up into the hands of the chief priests. By all these warnings, did not our Lord intend that Judas should be benefited?-that he should repent of his iniquity, and turn and find mercy?

**Verse 22. *Looked one on another doubting of whom he spake.***— See the notes on Matthew 26:20-25. Every one but Judas, conscious of his own innocence, looked about upon all the rest, wondering who in that company could be such a traitor! Even Judas himself is not suspected. Is not this a proof that his general conduct had been such as to subject him to no suspicion?

**Verse 23. *Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom***— The Jews of those days, at their suppers, reclined, supported by their left arm, on couches placed round the table, as the Greeks and Romans did. On each couch there were two or three persons; and the head of one of them came near to the bosom of him who reclined above him on the same couch. The person here mentioned was John, the writer of this history, who, being more tenderly



loved by Christ than the rest, had always that place at table which was nearest to his Lord.

**Verse 25. *He then lying on Jesus' breast***— *ἐπιπεσὼν*, laying his head against the breast of Christ, in a loving, respectful manner. As the expressions in the text are different here from those in the preceding verse, it shows that John altered his position at table, in order to ask the question which Peter suggested, which he probably did by whispering to our Lord; for, from John 13:28, we may learn that the other disciples had not heard what John said; and it is likely that the following words—It is he to whom I shall give the morsel when I have dipped it, were whispered back by Christ to John.

**Verse 26. *And when he had dipped the sop***— Dr. Lightfoot observes that it was no unusual thing to dip a sop and give it to any person; and it is probable that the rest of the disciples considered it as given to Judas that he might hurry to do some work on which he wished to employ him, and not wait to finish his supper in a regular manner. They did not hear the question that John asked, nor our Lord's answer; but they no doubt heard the words, That thou doest do quickly—and might understand them as above.

**Verse 27. *Satan entered into him***.— He had entered into him before, and now he enters again, to strengthen him in his purpose of delivering up his Master. But the morsel was not the cause of this entering in; the giving of it only marks the time in which the devil confirmed Judas in his traitorous purpose. Some have thought that this morsel was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: but this is an utter mistake.

***That thou doest, do quickly***.— As if he had said: “Thou art past all counsel; thou hast filled up the measure of thy iniquity, and hast wholly abandoned thyself to Satan; I will not force thee to turn from thy purpose, and without this thou wilt not. Thy designs are all known to me; what thou art determined to do, and I to permit, do directly; delay not, I am ready.”

**Verse 29. *Buy those things that we have need of against the feast***— Calmet's observation here has weight so it. “The disciples who thought that our Lord had said this to Judas, knew well that on the day of the

passover there was neither buying nor selling in Jerusalem. This, therefore, did not happen on the paschal evening; for the feast, according to the common opinion, must have begun the preceding evening, and Jesus have eaten the passover with his disciples the night before his death; but it appears to me, by the whole text of St. John, that the passover did not begin till the time in which our Lord expired upon the cross. It was then that they were sacrificing the paschal lambs in the temple. It is therefore probable that the apostles believed that Judas went to purchase a lamb, and the other necessary things for the evening, and for the day of the Passover.” On this subject the reader is requested to consult the observations at the end of Matthew 26, where the subject is considered at large. {Matthew 26:75}

***Give something to the poor.***— It is well known that our Lord and his disciples lived on public charity; and yet they gave alms out of what they had thus received. From this we learn that even those who live on charity themselves are expected to divide a little with those who are in deeper distress and want.

**Verse 30. *He-went immediately out: and it was night.***— He set off to Jerusalem from Bethany, which was about two miles distant; and, under the conduct of the prince of darkness, and in the time of darkness, he did this work of darkness.

**Verse 31. *Now is the Son of man glorified***— *νυν εδοξασθη*, Hath been glorified. Now it fully appears that I am the person appointed to redeem a lost world by my blood. I have already been glorified by this appointment, and am about to be farther glorified by my death, resurrection, and ascension.

**Verse 32. *And shall straightway glorify him.***— Or, glorify him, *ευθυς*, immediately; “he did, not only in the miracles wrought at his death, but also in that remarkable case mentioned, John 18:6, when the whole crowd that came to seize him were driven back with a word of his mouth, and fell to the ground.

**Verse 33. *Little children***— Or, rather, beloved children. *τεκνια*, a word frequently used by this apostle in his epistles. It is an expression which implies great tenderness and affection, and such as a fond mother uses to

her most beloved babes. Now that Judas was gone out, he could use this epithet without any restriction of meaning.

***Yet a little while***— The end of my life is at hand; Judas is gone to consummate his treason; I have but a few hours to be with you, and you shall be by and by scattered.

***Ye shall seek me***— For a few days ye shall feel great distress because of my absence.

***Whither I go, ye cannot come***— Your time is not up. The Jews shall die in their sins, martyrs to their infidelity; but ye shall die in the truth, martyrs for your Lord.

**Verse 34. *A new commandment I give unto you***— In what sense are we to understand that this was a new commandment? Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, was a positive precept of the law, Leviticus 19:18, and it is the very same that Christ repeats here; how then was it new? Our Lord answers this question, Even AS I have loved you. Now Christ more than fulfilled the Mosaic precept; he not only loved his neighbor AS himself, but he loved him MORE than himself, for he laid down his life for men. In this he calls upon the disciples to imitate him; to be ready on all occasions to lay down their lives for each other. This was, strictly, a new commandment: no system of morality ever prescribed any thing so pure and disinterested as this. Our blessed Lord has outdone all the moral systems in the universe in two words: 1. Love your enemies; 2. Lay down your lives for each other.

**Verse 35. *By this shall all men know***, etc.— From this time forward, this mutual and disinterested love shall become the essential and distinctive mark of all my disciples. When they love one another with pure hearts, fervently, even unto death, then shall it fully appear that they are disciples of that person who laid down his life for his sheep, and who became, by dying, a ransom for all.

The disciples of different teachers were known by their habits, or some particular creed or rite, or point of austerity, which they had adopted; but the disciples of Christ were known by this love which they bore to each other. The primitive Christians were particularly known by this among the Gentiles. Tertullian, in his Apology, gives us their very words: Vide,

inquiet, ut se diligunt; et pro alterutro mori parati sunt. “See, said they, how they love one another, and are ready to lay down their lives for each other.”

**Verse 36. *Thou canst not follow me now***— Thou hast not faith strong enough to die for me, nor is thy work yet done; but hereafter thou shalt suffer for my sake, and die in defense of my truth. See John 21:18.

**Verse 37. *Why cannot I follow thee now?***— Peter probably thought that our Lord intended to go some long journey, which would necessarily subject him to many inconveniences and fatigue; and he felt quite disposed to follow him in this supposed journey, at all hazards. He saw no reason, because he did not see our Lord’s meaning, why he could not follow him now.

***I will lay down my life for thy sake.***— Poor Peter! thou wast sincere, but thou didst not know thy own strength. Thou wast at this time willing to die, but when the time came wast not able. Christ must first die for Peter, before Peter can die for him. Let no man think he can do any thing good, without the immediate assistance of God. Peter’s denial should be an eternal warning to all self-confident persons: though there be sincerity and good will at the bottom, yet in the trial these cannot perform that office which belongs to the power of God. We should will, and then look to God for power to execute: without him we can do nothing.

**Verse 38. *The cock shall not crow***, etc.— See on Matthew 26:34. Dr. Lightfoot has very properly remarked that we must not understand these words, as if the cock should not crow at all before Peter had thrice denied his Master; but we must understand them thus: “The cock shall not have finished his crowing before thou wilt thrice deny me. When the time was near, the very night in which this was to happen, Christ said, This very night the cock shall not crow his second time, etc. But here, two days before that time, he says, the cock shall not crow; that is, shall not have done his crowing. The Jews, and some other nations, divided the cock-crowing into the first, the second, and the third times.”

1. ON peters denial of our Lord much has been written: by one class he has been incautiously excused, and by another rashly censured. Peter was self-confident, but he was certainly sincere, and, had he trusted more in

God and less in himself, he would not have miscarried. He did not look to his Maker for strength, and therefore he fell. He was surprised, and found unarmed. It is a well-known fact that circumstances have occurred in which persons of the most bold, intrepid, and adventurous minds have proved mere cowards, and acted to their own disgrace and ruin. Facts of this kind occur in the naval and military history of this and every other country. No man is master of himself at all times; therefore prudence and caution should ever be united to courage. Peter had courage, but he had not caution: he felt a powerful and determined will; but the trial was above his own strength, and he did not look to God for power from on high. He was warned by this miscarriage, but he dearly bought his experience. Let him that readeth understand.

2. A fact which occurs in the English Martyrology will serve to illustrate the history of Peter's denial and fall. In the reign of Queen Mary, when the Papists of this kingdom burned all the Protestants they could convict of denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, a poor man who had received the truth in theory, but had not as yet felt its power, was convicted and sentenced by their bloody tribunal to be burned alive. While they were drawing him to the place of execution, he was very pensive and melancholy; and when he came within sight of the stake, etc., he was overpowered with fear and terror, and exclaimed, O! I can't burn! I can't burn! Some of the attending priests, supposing that he wished to recant, spoke to him to that effect. The poor man still believed the truth-felt no disposition to deny it-but did not feel such an evidence of his Maker's approbation in his own soul as could enable him to burn for it! He continued in great agony, feeling all the bitterness of death, and calling on God to reveal himself through the Son of his love. While thus engaged, God broke in upon his soul and he was filled with peace and joy in believing. He then clapped his hands, and exclaimed with a powerful voice, I can burn! I can burn! He was bound to the stake, and burned gloriously, triumphing in God through whom he had received the atonement. This was a case in point. The man was convinced of the truth, and was willing to burn for the truth; but had not as yet power, because he had not yet received an evidence of his acceptance with God. He pleaded for this with strong crying and tears, and God answered him to the joy of his soul; and then he was as able as he was willing to go to prison and to death. Without

the power and consolation of the Spirit of God, who could be a martyr, even for Divine truth? We see now plainly how the case lies: no man is expected to do a supernatural work by his own strength; if left to that, in a case of this kind, his failure must be inevitable. But, in all spiritual matters, assistance is to be sought from God; he that seeks shall find, and he that finds Divine strength shall be equal to the task he is called to fulfill. Peter was incautious and off his guard: the trial came-he looked not for power from on high, and he fell: not merely because he was weak-not because God withheld the necessary assistance-but because he did not depend on and seek it. In no part of this business can Peter be excused-he is every where blamable, and yet, through the whole, an object of pity.

## CHAPTER 14.

*Christ comforts his disciples, on the event of his removal from them, by the consideration of his going to prepare a place for them in heaven, 1-4. Thomas questions him concerning the way to the Father, and is answered, 5-7. Philip proposes a difficulty, and Christ shows that he and the Father are one; that he is Mediator between God and man; and that whatsoever is asked in his name shall be obtained, 8-14. He promises them the Holy Spirit as the Comforter and Spirit of truth, 15-18. Shows them that he is shortly to leave them, and that those who love him should be loved of the Father, 19-21. Jude asks a question, how Christ is to manifest himself to the disciples, and not to the Jews? 22. Christ answers, and shows that the manifestation is to be made to those who love God, and to them the Holy Spirit is to be an infallible teacher, 23-26. He bequeaths his peace to them, and fortifies them against discouragements, 27-29. Foretells his approaching death, 30, 31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14.

**Verse 1.** *Let not your heart be troubled*— After having answered St. Peter's question, he addresses himself again to his disciples, and tells them not to be afflicted at his leaving them, nor to lose courage because of what he said concerning Peter's denying him; that if they reposed their confidence in God, he would protect them; and that, howsoever they might see him treated, they should believe in him more firmly, as his sufferings, death, and resurrection should be to them the most positive proof of his being the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

*Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*— It is best to read both the verbs in the imperative mood:—Place your confidence in God, and in me as the Mediator between God and man, John 14:12-14; and expect the utmost support from God; but expect it all through me. The disciples began to lose all hope of a secular kingdom, and were discouraged in consequence: Christ promises them a spiritual and heavenly inheritance, and thus lifts up their drooping hearts.

**Verse 2. *In my Fathers house***, etc.— The kingdom of glory.

***Many mansions***— Though I have said before that whither I am going ye cannot come now, yet do not think that we shall be for ever separated. I am going to that state of glory where there is not only a place of supreme eminence for myself, but also places for all my disciples;-various degrees of glory, suited to the various capacities and attainments of my followers.

Our Lord alludes here to the temple, which was called the house of God, in the precincts of which there were a great number of chambers, 1 Kings 6:5; Ezra 8:29; Jeremiah 35:2, 4; 36:10.

***If-not-I would have told you***.— If your places were not prepared in the kingdom of God, I would not have permitted you to have indulged a vain hope concerning future blessedness.

**Verse 3. *And if I go***— And when I shall have gone and prepared a place for you-opened the kingdom of an eternal glory for your reception, and for the reception of all that shall die in the faith, I will come again, after my resurrection, and give you the fullest assurances of this state of blessedness; and confirm you in the faith, by my grace and the effusion of my Spirit. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, and with great probability too, that there is an allusion here to Numbers 10:33: And the ark of the Lord went before them to search out a resting place for them.

**Verse 4. *And whither I go ye know***— I have told you this so often and so plainly that ye must certainly have comprehended what I have said.

**Verse 5. *Lord, we know not***— Thomas, perhaps, thought that our Lord only spoke of his going some distance from the place where he then was.

**Verse 6. *I am the WAY***— That leads so the Father:-the TRUTH that teaches the knowledge of God, and directs in the way:-the LIFE that animates all those who seek and serve him, and which is to be enjoyed eternally at the end of the way.

Christ is the WAY: 1. By his doctrine, John 6:68. 2. By his example, 1 Peter 2:91. 3. By his sacrifice, Hebrews 9:8, 9. 4. By his Spirit, John 16:13.



He is the TRUTH: 1. In opposition to all false religions. 2. To the Mosaic law, which was only the shadow, not the truth or substance, of the good things which were to come. And 3. In respect to all the promises of God, 2 Corinthians 1:20.

He is the LIFE, both in grace and glory; the life that not only saves from death, but destroys it.

*No man cometh unto the Father*— By any other doctrine, by any other merit, or by any other intercession than mine.

**Verse 7.** *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father*— Because I and the Father are ONE, John 10:30. Or, if ye had properly examined the intention and design of the law, ye would have been convinced that it referred to me; and that all that I have done and instituted was according to the design and intention of the Father, as expressed in that law.

**Verse 8.** *Show us the Father*— As if he had said, We have seen and adored thee, and our happiness will be complete if thou show us the Father. The demand of Philip was similar to that made by Moses, Exodus 33:18. He wished to see the glory of God. In Peter, James, or John, this would have been inexcusable; but Philip had not seen the transfiguration on the mount. The Jewish history is full of the manifestations which God made of himself, and especially when he gave the law. As Christ was introducing a new law, Philip wished to have an additional manifestation of God.

**Verse 9.** *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*— Could any creature say these words? Do they not evidently imply that Christ declared himself to his disciples to be the everlasting God?

**Verse 10.** *I am in the Father, and the Father in me?*— We are essentially one; and those who have seen me have seen him who sent me.

*He doeth the works.*— We are not only one in nature, but one also in operation. The works which I have done bear witness of the infinite perfection of my nature. Such miracles as I have wrought could only be performed by unlimited power.

**Verse 12.** *And greater works than these*— The miracles which I have wrought could not have been wrought but by the omnipotence of God; but that omnipotence can work greater. And those who believe on my name shall, through my almighty power, be enabled to work greater miracles than those which I have ordinarily wrought. An impostor might seduce the people by false miracles; but he could not make his power and cunning pass to all those who were seduced by him: but I will give you this proof of the divinity of my mission and the truth of my doctrine.

Perhaps the greater works refer to the immense multitudes that were brought to God by the ministry of the apostles. By the apostles was the doctrine of Christ spread far and wide; while Christ confined his ministry chiefly to the precincts of Judea. It is certainly the greatest miracle of Divine grace to convert the obstinate, wicked heart of man from sin to holiness. This was done in numberless cases by the disciples, who were endued with power from on high, while proclaiming remission of sins through faith in his blood.

Some account for the greater works thus: 1. The very shadow of Peter healed the diseased, Acts 5:15.

2. Diseases were cured, and demons cast out, by applying to the persons handkerchiefs and aprons that had before touched the body of Paul, Acts 19:12.

3. By the word of Peter, Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, Acts 5:5, 9, 10.

4. Elymas the sorcerer was struck blind by the word of Paul, Acts 13:11.

5. Christ only preached in Judea, and in the language only of that country; but the apostles preached through the most of the then known world, and in all the languages of all countries. But let it be remarked that all this was done by the power of Christ; and I think it still more natural to attribute the greater works to the greater number of conversions made under the apostles' ministry. The reason which our Lord gives for this is worthy of deep attention: —

*Because I go unto my Father.*— Where I shall be an Intercessor for you, that: —

**Verse 13. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name***— To enable you to perform these miracles, and to convert souls, may be granted you. Besides, by going unto the Father, I shall receive the Holy Spirit, and send down his abundant influences into the hearts of those who believe.

**Verse 15. *If ye love me, keep my commandments***.— Do not be afflicted at the thought of my being separated from you: the most solid proof ye can give of your attachment to and affection for me is to keep my commandments. This I shall receive as a greater proof of your affection than your tears.

**Verse 16. *I will pray the Father***— After having made an atonement for the sin of the world, I will become the Mediator between God and man; and through my mediation and intercession shall all the blessings of grace and glory be acquired.

***Another Comforter***— The word *παρακλητος* signifies not only a comforter, but also an advocate, a defender of a cause, a counsellor, patron, mediator. Christ is thus termed, 1 John 2:1, where the common translation renders the word advocate. Christ is thus called, because he is represented as transacting the concerns of our souls with God; and for this cause, he tells us, he goes unto the Father, John 14:12. The Holy Spirit is thus called, because he transacts the cause of God and Christ with us, explains to us the nature and importance of the great atonement, shows the necessity of it, counsels us to receive it, instructs us how to lay hold on it, vindicates our claim to it, and makes intercessions in us with unutterable groanings. As Christ acted with his disciples while he sojourned with them, so the Holy Ghost acts with those who believe in his name.

***For ever***— As the death and atonement of Christ will be necessary to man till the conclusion of the world, so the office of the Holy Spirit must be continued among men till the end of time: therefore says Christ, he shall continue with you for ever, teaching, comforting, advising, defending, and interceding for you and for all my followers to the end of time.

**Verse 17. *The Spirit of truth***— The Spirit, or Holy Ghost, whose essential office is to manifest, vindicate, and apply the truth. The Gospel of Christ may be thus called, because it exposes falsity, removes error, and teaches the knowledge of the true God—shows the way to him, saves from

vanity and illusive hopes, and establishes solid happiness in the souls of those who believe.

***The world cannot receive***— By the world, St. John means those who are influenced only by the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life, 1 John 2:16. Now these cannot receive the Spirit of the truth, because they see him not, have no spiritual discernment, attend to nothing but the dictates of their corrupt passions and affections, and will admit of no influence but what can be an object of their senses. Hence all the deign and irreligion in the world. God, in the operation of his hands, and in the influences of his Spirit, is found every where except in the perverted passions of men. In these alone do men of corrupt minds seek him; here only he is not to be found, and therefore they become infidels and atheists.

***Bu ye know him***— Ye have already received a measure of the truth, and ye believe in this Spirit. Probably our Lord refers to the knowledge which they should afterwards attain: in this sense the passage has been understood by the Vulgate, Nonnus, and two copies of the Itala, which read, Ye SHALL know him.

***For he dwelleth with you***— Or, as the AETHiopic, Vulgate, Nonnus, and six copies of the Itala read, he shall dwell with you, (see above;) and this, it is very evident, is the meaning of the evangelist, who not unfrequently uses the present for the future tense. It is certain the Holy Spirit was not yet given to the disciples so as to dwell in them; this St. John himself assures us, John 7:39. And it is evidently of that Spirit and its influences, which was not given till the day of pentecost, that our Lord here speaks.

**Verse 18. *I will not leave you comfortless***— Literally, orphans. The original word **ορφανος**, is by some derived from **ορφνος**, obscure, dark, because, says Mintert, an orphan (one deprived of father and mother) is little esteemed, neglected, and is obliged to wander about in obscurity and darkness. Others derive it from the Hebrew **פּרַח** charaph, to strip or make bare, despoil, because such a child is destitute of comfort, direction, and support, and is a prey to misery and disease, to sin and to death.

The disciples of a particular teacher among the Hebrews called him father; his scholars were called his children, and, on his death, were considered as orphans. Christ calls his disciples children, beloved children, John 13:33;

and, now that he is about to be removed from them by death, he assures them that they shall not be left fatherless, or without a teacher; for in a little time he should come again, (rise from the dead,) and, after his ascension, they should be made partakers of that Spirit which would be their comforter, advocate, teacher, and guide for ever.

**Verse 19. *Because I live***— As surely as I shall rise from the dead, so shall ye. My resurrection shall be the proof and pledge of yours. And because I live a life of intercession for you at the right hand of God, ye shall live a life of grace and peace here, and a life of glory hereafter.

**Verse 20. *That I am in my Father***— After my resurrection, ye shall be more fully convinced of this important truth, that I and the Father are ONE; for I will live in you by the energy of my Spirit, and ye shall live in me by faith, love, and obedience.

**Verse 21. *He it is that loveth me***— See on John 14:15.

***And will manifest myself to him.***— All my faithful disciples shall see me after my resurrection; and I will manifest my power and goodness to all those who believe in and obey me, even to the end of the world.

**Verse 22. *Judas***— The same as Thaddeus and Lebbeus, the brother of James, and author of what is called the epistle of Jude.

***How is it***— Or, how can it be-*τι γεγρονεν*, what is to happen?-on what account is it? Judas, who was probably thinking that the kingdom of Christ should extend over all the earth, wonders how this can be, and yet Christ manifest himself only to his disciples and not to the world, John 14:19. To this our Lord, in a more express manner than he had done before answers: —

**Verse 23. *If a man***— Not only my present disciples, but all those who shall believe on me through their word, or that of their successors:

***Love me***— Receive me as his Savior, and get the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost:

***He will keep my words***— Observe all my sayings, and have his affections and conduct regulated by my Spirit and doctrine:

***My Father will love him***— Call him his child; support, defend, and preserve him as such.

***And we will come unto him***— God the Father, through his Son, will continue to pour out his choicest blessings upon his head and upon his heart:

***And make our abode with him.***— Will make his heart our temple, where God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, shall rest, receive homage, and dwell to eternity. Thus will I manifest myself to the believing, loving, obedient disciple, and not to the world, who will not receive the Spirit of the truth.

**Verse 24. *He that loveth me not,*** etc.— Hence we learn that the man who is not obedient to the testimonies of Christ does not love him; and the Spirit of this truth has said, He who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed, 1 Corinthians 16:22.

**Verse 26. *He shall teach you all things***— If in the things which I have already spoken to you, there appear to you any obscurity, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, Counsellor, and Instructor, will take away all your doubts, free you from all embarrassment, and give you a perfect understanding in all things: and this Spirit ye shall shortly receive.

***And bring all things to your remembrance***— Here Christ promises them that inspiration of the Holy Spirit which enabled them not only to give a true history of his life and death, but also gave them the most perfect recollection of all the words which he had spoken to them, so that they have been able to transmit to posterity the identical words which Jesus uttered in his sermons, and in his different discourses with them, the Jews, and others.

**Verse 27. *Peace I leave with you***— The Jewish form of salutation and benediction. A wish of peace among them is thus to be understood: May you prosper in body and soul, and enjoy every earthly and heavenly good! For the meaning of this word, see Matthew 5:9.

***My peace I give unto you***— Such tranquillity of soul, such uninterrupted happiness of mind, such everlasting friendship with God as I enjoy, may ye all enjoy! And such blessedness I bequeath unto you: it is my last, my best, my dying legacy.

***Not as the world giveth***— Not as the Jews, in empty wishes: not as the people of the world, in empty compliments. Their salutations and benedictions are generally matters of custom and polite ceremony, given without desire or design; but I mean what I say; what I wish you, that I will give you. To his followers Jesus gives peace, procures it, preserves it, and establishes it. He is the author, prince, promoter, and keeper of peace.

***Neither let it be afraid.***— μηδε δειλιατω, Let not your heart shrink back through fear of any approaching evil. This is the proper meaning of the word. In a few hours ye will be most powerfully assaulted; but stand firm:-the evil will only fall upon me; and this evil will result in your comfort and salvation, and in the redemption of a lost world.

**Verse 28. *I go away***— To the Father by my death:

***And come again unto you.***— By my resurrection.

***Ye would rejoice***— Because, as the Messiah, I am going to receive a kingdom, and power, and glory, for ever. Therefore as my friends ye should rejoice in my elevation, though for a while it may put you to the pain of being separated from me: besides, I am going that I may send you the Holy Spirit, which shall fill you with the fullness of God: on your own account, therefore, ye should have rejoiced and not mourned.

***My Father is greater than I.***— In John 14:24, Christ tells his disciples that the Father had sent him: i.e. in his quality of Messiah, he was sent by the Father to instruct, and to save mankind. Now, as the sender is greater than the sent, John 13:16, so in this sense is the Father greater than the Son; and in this sense was the passage understood by Origen, Jerome, Novatian, and Vigilius, who read the text thus: The Father, ο πεμψας, who sent me, is greater than I. It certainly requires very little argument, and no sophistry, to reconcile this saying with the most orthodox notion of the Godhead of Christ; as he is repeatedly speaking of his Divine and of his human nature. Of the former he says, I and the Father are one, John 10:30; and of the latter he states, with the same truth, The Father is greater than I.

**Verse 29. *I have told you before it come to pass***— Lest my death should be a stumbling-block to you, I have spoken of it beforehand, and showed you the necessity of it, that when it happens ye may believe, that as I could predict it so clearly, and so circumstantially, so all the good which I

have promised shall be the result may be confidently expected by you; and that your sorrow, if not entirely removed, may at least be much mitigated.

**Verse 30. *The prince of this world***— **τουτου**, of this, is omitted by ABDEGHKLMS, Mt. BH, one hundred others; both the Syriac, later Persic, all the Arabic, and several of the primitive fathers. I rather think the omission of the pronoun makes the sense more general; for, had he said THIS world, the words might have been restrained to the Jewish state, or to the Roman government. But who is the person called here the prince of the world?

1. Mr. Wakefield thinks that Christ speaks here of himself, as he does in John 12:31, (see the note there,) and translates this verse and the following thus: For the ruler of this world is coming; and I have nothing now to do, but to convince the world that I love the Father, and do as he commanded me. On which he observes that our Lord speaks of what he shall be, when he comes again, and not of what he then was: compare John 14:18; John 16:16; 17:2; Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9. And how often does he speak of himself, as the Son of man, in the third person! See his vindication of this translation in the third vol. of his New Testament.

2. Others think that our Lord refers to the Roman government, the ruler of the world, who, by its deputy, Pilate, was going to judge him, but who should find nothing (**ευρησει ουδεν**, which is the reading found in some excellent MSS. and versions, and is followed by almost all the primitive fathers,) as a just cause of death in him—nothing in the whole of his conduct which was in the least reprehensible; and this indeed Pilate witnessed in the most solemn manner. See John 18:38; 19:4, 12; see also Luke 23:4, etc., and Matthew 27:24.

3. But the most general opinion is that Satan is meant, who is called the prince of the power of the air, Ephesians 2:2; and who is supposed to be the same that is called the god of this world, 2 Corinthians 4:4; and who at his last and most desperate trial, the agony in the garden, should be convinced that there was nothing of his nature in Christ, nothing that would coincide with his solicitations, and that he should find himself completely foiled in all his attacks, and plainly foresee the impending ruin of his kingdom. It is very difficult to ascertain the real meaning here: of the



different opinions proposed above, the reader must take that which he deems the most likely.

**Verse 31.** *Arise, let us go hence.*— Calmet supposes that Christ, having rendered thanks to God, and sung the usual hymn, Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; rose from the table, left the city, and went towards the garden of Olives, or garden of Gethsemane, on the road to which, a part of the following discourse was delivered. It was now about midnight, and the moon was almost full, it being the 14th day of her age, about the time in which the Jewish passover was to be slain.

THE reader should carefully note the conduct of our Lord. He goes to die as a SACRIFICE, out of love to mankind, in obedience to the Divine will, and with unshaken courage. All our actions should be formed on this plan. They should have the love of God and man for their principle and motive; his glory for their end; and his will for their rule. He who lives and acts thus shall live for ever. Amen.

## CHAPTER 15.

*The union of Jesus Christ with his followers, represented by the parable of a vine and its branches, 1-11. He exhorts them to mutual love, 12. Calls them his friends, and promises to lay down his life for them, 13-15. Appoints them their work, and promises them success in it, 16. Renews the exhortation to mutual love, 17, and foretells the opposition they would meet with from the world, 18-21. The sin of the Jews in rejecting Christ, 22-25. The Holy Spirit is promised as a witness for Christ, and the Comforter of the disciples, 26, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15.

**Verse 1. *I am the true vine***— Perhaps the vines which they met with, on their road from Bethany to Gethsemane, might have given rise to this discourse. Some of the disciples were probably making remarks on the different kinds of them, and our Lord took the opportunity of improving the conversation, according to his usual manner, to the instruction of their souls. He might here term himself the true vine, or vine of the right sort, in opposition to the wild and barren vine. Some MSS. and several of the fathers read the verse thus: I am the true vine, ye are the branches, and my Father is the husbandman. Some think that, as this discourse followed the celebration of the Eucharist, our Lord took occasion from the fruit of the vine, used in that ordinance, to introduce this similitude.

**Verse 2. *Every branch in me***— I stand in the same relation to my followers, and they to me, as the vine to the branches, and the branches to the vine.

***He taketh away***— As the vine-dresser will remove every unfruitful branch from the vine, so will my Father remove every unfruitful member from my mystical body—such as Judas, the unbelieving Jews, the apostatizing disciples, and all false and merely nominal Christians, who are attached to the vine by faith in the word and Divine mission of Christ, while they live not in his life and Spirit, and bring forth no fruit to the glory of God; and also every branch which has been in him by true faith—such as have given

way to iniquity, and made shipwreck of their faith and of their good conscience: all these he taketh away.

**He purgeth it**— He pruneth. The branch which bears not fruit, the husbandman **αρει αυτο**, taketh IT away; but the branch that beareth fruit, **καθαρει αυτο**, he taketh away FROM it, i.e. he prunes away excrescences, and removes every thing that might hinder its increasing fruitfulness. The verb **καθαρω**; from **κατα**, intens. and **αρω**, I take away, signifies ordinarily to cleanse, purge, purify, but is certainly to be taken in the sense of pruning, or cutting off, in this text, as the verb *purgare* is used by HORACE, Epist. lib. i. ep. vii. v. 51.

*Cultello proprios purgantem leniter unguet.*

*“Composedly PARING his own nails with a penknife.”*

He who brings forth fruit to God’s glory, according to his light and power, will have the hinderances taken away from his heart; for his very thoughts shall be cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

**Verse 3. Now ye are clean**— **καθαροι εστε**, Ye are pruned. As our Lord has not changed the metaphor, it would be wrong to change the expression.

**Through the word**— **δια τον λογος**, Through that word—that doctrine of holiness which I have incessantly preached unto you, and which ye have received. Perhaps our Lord more immediately refers here to the words which he had spoken concerning Judas, John 13:21-30, in consequence of which Judas went out and finished his bargain with the chief priests; he being gone off, the body of the apostles was purified; and thus he might say, Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

**Verse 4. Abide in me**— Hold fast faith and a good conscience; and let no trials turn you aside from the truth. And I will abide in you—ye shall receive every help and influence from me that your souls can require, in order to preserve and save them to eternal life.

These two things are absolutely necessary to our salvation: 1. That we continue closely united to Christ by faith and love, and live in and to him. 2. That we continually receive from him the power to do good; for as the branch, however good in itself, cannot bear fruit from itself, through its own juice, which it has already derived from the tree, and can be no longer

supported than it continues in union with the parent stock, neither can ye, unless ye abide in me. As the branch partakes of the nature of the tree, is nourished by its juice, and lives by its life, so ye must be made partakers of my Divine nature, be wise in my wisdom, powerful in my might, and pure through my holiness.

**Verse 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.***—χωρις εμου ου δυνασθε ποιειν ουδεν-Separated from me, ye can do nothing at all. God can do without man, but man cannot do without God. Following the metaphor of our Lord, it would be just as possible to do any good without him, as for a branch to live, thrive, and bring forth fruit, while cut off from that tree from which it not only derives its juices, but its very existence also.

Nearly similar to this saying of our Lord, is that of Creeshna (the incarnate God of the Hindoos) to his disciple Arjoon: “God is the gift of charity; God is the offering; God is the fire of the altar; by God the sacrifice is performed; and God is to be obtained by him who maketh God alone the object of his works.” And again: “I am the sacrifice; I am the worship; I am the spices; I am the invocation; I am the fire; and I am the victim. I am the Father and Mother of this world, and the Preserver. I am the Holy One, worthy to be known; the mystic figure OM; (see on John 1:14;) I am the journey of the good; the Comforter; the Creator; the Witness; the resting-place; the asylum, and the Friend. I am the place of all things; and the inexhaustible seed of nature; I am sunshine, and I am rain; I now draw in, and now let forth.” See Bhagvat Geeta, pp. 54 and 80. Could such sentiments as these ever come from any other source than Divine revelation? There is a saying in Theophilus very similar to one of those above: θεος ου χωρειται, αλλα αυτος εστι τοπος των ολων.-God is not comprehended, but he is the place of all things.

**Verse 6. *If a man abide not in me***— Our Lord in the plainest manner intimates that a person may as truly be united to him as the branch is to the tree that produces it, and yet be afterwards cut off and cast into the fire; because he has not brought forth fruit to the glory of his God. No man can cut off a branch from a tree to which that branch was never united: it is absurd, and contrary to the letter and spirit of the metaphor, to talk of being seemingly in Christ-because this means nothing. If there was only a seeming union, there could be only a seeming excision: so the matter is just

where it began; nothing is done on either side, and nothing said to any purpose.

***He is cast forth***— Observe, that person who abides not in Christ, in a believing loving, obedient spirit, is-1. Cut off from Jesus, having no longer any right or title to him or to his salvation. 2. He is withered-deprived of all the influences of God's grace and Spirit; loses all his heavenly unction; becomes indifferent, cold, and dead to every holy and spiritual word and work. 3. He is gathered-becomes (through the judgment of God) again united with backsliders like himself and other workers of iniquity; and, being abandoned to his own heart and Satan, he is, 4. Cast into the fire-separated from God's people, from God himself, and from the glory of his power. And, 5. He is burned-is eternally tormented with the devil and his angels, and with all those who have lived and died in their iniquity. Reader! pray God that this may never be thy portion.

**Verse 7. *If ye abide in me***, etc.— “Those,” says Creeshna, “whose understandings are in him, (God,) whose souls are in him, whose confidence is in him, whose asylum is in him, are by the inspired wisdom purified from all their offenses, and go from whence they shall never return.” Geeta, p. 59.

Observe, in order to have influence with God, we must-1. Be united to Christ-if ye abide in me. 2. That in order to be preserved in this union, we must have our lives regulated by the doctrine of Christ-and my words abide in you. 3. That to profit by this union and doctrine, we must pray-ye shall ask. 4. That every heavenly blessing shall be given to those who continue in this union, with a loving, obedient, praying spirit:-ye shall ask what ye will, etc.

**Verse 8. *Herein is my Father glorified***— Or, honored. It is the honor of the husbandman to have good, strong, vigorous vines, plentifully laden with fruit: so it is the honor of God to have strong, vigorous, holy children, entirely freed from sin, and perfectly filled with his love.

**Verse 10. *If ye keep my commandments***, etc.— Hence we learn that it is impossible to retain a sense of God's pardoning love, without continuing in the obedience of faith.

**Verse 11. *That my joy may remain in you***— That the joy which I now feel, on account of your steady, affectionate attachment to me, may be lasting, I give you both warnings and directions, that ye may abide in the faith.

***That your joy might be full.***— Or, complete-*πληρωθη*, filled up: a metaphor taken from a vessel, into which water or any other thing is poured, till it is full to the brim. The religion of Christ expels all misery from the hearts of those who receive it in its fullness. It was to drive wretchedness out of the world that Jesus came into it.

Bishop Pearce, by joining *εν εμοι* to *χαρα*, and not to *μεινη*, translates the verse thus: These things have I spoken, that my joy in you may remain—which is according to the meaning given to the first clause.

**Verse 12. *That ye love one another***— See on John 13:34. So deeply was thus commandment engraved on the heart of this evangelist that St. Jerome says, lib. iii. c. 6, Com. ad Galat., that in his extreme old age, when he used to be carried to the public assemblies of the believers, his constant saying was, Little children, love one another. His disciples, wearied at last with the constant repetition of the same words, asked him, Why he constantly said the same thing? “Because (said he) it is the commandment of the Lord, and the observation of it alone is sufficient.” Quia praeceptum Domini est, et, si solum fiat, sufficit.

**Verse 13. *That a man lay down his life for his friends.***— No man can carry his love for his friend farther than this: for, when he gives up his life, he gives up all that he has. This proof of my love for you I shall give in a few hours; and the doctrine which I recommend to you I am just going to exemplify myself. There are several remarkable cases, in heathen antiquity, where one friend offered his life for another. The two following will not stand dishonorably even in the book of God; became every thing loving and pure, in heathen, Jew, or Christian, must come from the God of love and purity.

When Cyrus had made war on the king of Armenia, and had taken him, his wife, and children, with Tigranes his son, and his wife, prisoners; treating with the old king concerning his ransom, he said, How much money wilt thou give me to have thy wife again? All that I have, replied the king. And

how much wilt thou advance to enjoy thy children again? All that I can produce, answered the king. By reckoning thus, said Cyrus, you prize these at twice as much as you possess. Then, turning to Tigranes, he said, How much wilt thou give as a ransom, that thou mayest have thy wife? (Now Tigranes had been but lately married, **και υπερφιλων την γυναικα**, and loved his wife exceedingly.) He answered, I will indeed, O Cyrus, **και της ψυχης πριαμην**, ransom her even with MY LIFE, that she may be no longer in thralldom. See XENOPH. Cyrop. lib. iii. c.

The second example, which is too long to be inserted, is that affecting account of the friendship of Nisus and Euryalus, given by Virgil, in the ninth book of the AENEIS. These two friends, leagued together, had slain many of the Rutulians in a night attack: at last Euryalus was taken prisoner. Nisus, concealed in a thicket, slew several of the enemy's chiefs with his javelins: Volscens, their general, not seeing the hand by which his officers were slain, determines to wreak his vengeance upon his prisoner. Nisus, seeing his friend about to be transfixed with the sword, rushing out of the wood where he lay hidden, suddenly cries: —

*ME! ME! adsum qui FECI! in ME convertite ferrum,  
O Rutuli! MEA fraus omnis:-nihil ISTE-nec ausus,  
Nec potuit-Caelum hoc, et conscia sidera testor!  
TANTUM infelicem*

*NIMIUM DILEXIT AMICUM.  
AEN. lib. ix. l. 427, etc.*

*“ME! ME! he cried, turn all your swords alone  
On ME!-the fact confess'd, the fault my own.  
HE neither could, nor durst, the guiltless youth;  
Ye moon and stars, bear witness to the truth!  
His only crime (if friendship can offend)  
Is too much love to his unhappy friend.”*

*DRYDEN.*

Those who understand the beautiful original will at once perceive that the earnestness, confusion, disorder, impatience, and burning love of the FRIEND, are poorly imitated in the above tame translation.

The friendship of David and Jonathan is well known: the latter cheerfully gave up his crown to his friend, though himself was every way worthy to wear it. But when all these instances of rare friendship and affection are

seen, read, and admired, let the affected reader turn his astonished eyes to Jesus, pouring out his blood, not for his friends, but for his ENEMIES; and, in the agonies of death, making supplication for his murderers, with, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!-and then let him help exclaiming, if he can,

*“O Lamb of God, was ever pain,  
Was ever LOVE like THINE!”*

**Verse 15. *Henceforth I call you not servants***— Which he at least indirectly had done, John 13:16; Matthew 10:24, 25; Luke 17:10.

***I have called you friends***— I have admitted you into a state of the most intimate fellowship with myself; and have made known unto you whatsoever I have heard from the Father, which, in your present circumstances, it was necessary for you to be instructed in.

**Verse 16. *Ye have not chosen me***— Ye have not elected me as your Teacher: I have called you to be my disciples; witnesses and depositories of the truth. It was customary among the Jews for every person to choose his own teacher.

***And ordained you***— Rather, I have appointed you: the word is  $\epsilon\theta\eta\kappa\alpha$ , I have PUT or placed you, i.e. in the vine.

Theodorus Mopsuensis, as quoted by Wetstein, observes that  $\epsilon\theta\eta\kappa\alpha$  is here used for  $\epsilon\phi\upsilon\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha$ ; (I have planted;) “and, in saying this, our Lord still makes use of the metaphor of the vine; as if he had said: I have not only planted you, but I have given you the greatest benefits, causing your branches to extend every where through the habitable world.”

The first ministers of the Gospel were the choice of Jesus Christ; no wonder, then, that they were so successful. Those whom men have since sent, without the appointment of God, have done no good. The choice should still continue with God, who, knowing the heart, knows best who is most proper for the Gospel ministry.

To be a genuine preacher of the Gospel, a man must-1. Be chosen of God to the work. 2. He must be placed in the true vine-united to Christ by faith. 3. He must not think to lead an idle life, but labor. 4. He must not wait till work be brought to him, but he must go and seek it. 5. He must



labor so as to bring forth fruit, i.e. to get souls converted to the Lord. 6. He must refer all his fruit to God, who gave him the power to labor, and blessed him in his work. 7. He must take care to water what he has planted, that his fruit may remain—that the souls whom he has gathered in be not scattered from the flock. 8. He must continue instant in prayer, that his labors may be accompanied with the presence and blessing of God.—Whatsoever ye shall ASK. 9. He must consider Jesus Christ as the great Mediator between God and man, proclaim his salvation, and pray in his name.—Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, etc. See Quesnel.

**Verse 18.** *If the world hate you*— As the followers of Christ were to be exposed to the hatred of the world, it was no small consolation to them to know that that hatred would be only in proportion to their faith and holiness; and that, consequently, instead of being troubled at the prospect of persecution, they should rejoice, because that should always be a proof to them that they were in the very path in which Jesus himself had trod. Dr. Lardner thinks that *πρωτον* is a substantive, or at least an adjective used substantively, and this clause of the text should be translated thus: If the world hate you, know that it hated me, your CHIEF. It is no wonder that the world should hate you, when it hated me, your Lord and Master, whose lips were without guile, and whose conduct was irreproachable. See the doctor's vindication of this translation, WORKS, vol. i. p. 306.

**Verse 19.** *Ye are not of the world-therefore*, etc.— On this very account, because ye do not join in fellowship with those who know not God, therefore they hate you. How true is that saying: —

*“The laws of Christ condemn a vicious world,  
And goad it to revenge!”*     GAMBOLD.

**Verse 20.** *If they have kept my saying*— Or, doctrine. Whosoever acknowledges me for the Christ will acknowledge you for my ministers.

Some translate the passage thus: If they have WATCHED my sayings, i.e. with an intent to accuse me for something which I have said, they will WATCH yours also: therefore be on your guard. *παρατηρειν* has this sense, as we have had occasion to observe before; and perhaps *τηρειν* has the same sense here, as it is much more agreeable to the context.

**Verse 21. *Because they know not him that sent me.***— This is the foundation of all religious persecution: those who are guilty of it, whether in Church or state, know nothing about God. If God tolerates a worship which professes to have him for its object, and which does not disturb the quiet or peace of society, no man has the smallest right to meddle with it; and he that does fight against God. His letting it pass is at least a tacit command that all should treat it as he has done.

**Verse 22. *But now they have no cloke for their sin.***— They are without excuse. See the margin, and see the note on John 9:41. Christ had done such works as demonstrated him to be the Messiah—yet they rejected him: here lay their sin; and this sin, and the punishment to which it exposed them, still remain; for they still continue to reject the Lord that bought them.

**Verse 25. *Written in their law***— See on John 10:34. These words are taken from Psalm 69:4. This psalm is applied to Christ, John 2:17; 19:28; to the vengeance of God against Judea, Acts 1:20. The psalm seems entirely prophetic of Christ. His deep abasement is referred to, Psalm 69:2-5; his prayer for his disciples and followers, Psalm 69:6; that for himself, in the garden of Gethsemane, Psalm 69:15-19; his crucifixion, Psalm 69:20-22; the vengeance of God against the Jews, from Psalm 69:23-29; the glorious manner in which he gets out of all his sufferings, Psalm 69:30; the abolition of the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, Psalm 69:31, compared with Isaiah 66:3; and, finally, the establishment of the Gospel through the whole world, in Psalm 69:33 and following verses. The reader will do well to consult the psalm before he proceeds.

**Verse 26. *But when the Comforter is come***— See on John 14:16.

**Verses 26-27. *He shall testify and ye also shall bear witness***— He shall bear his testimony in your souls, and ye shall bear this testimony to the world. And so they did, by their miracles, their preaching, their writings, their lives, and by their deaths. Our Lord appears to reason thus: In every respect the unbelief of the Jews is inexcusable. They believe not my doctrine, notwithstanding its purity and holiness. They believe not in the Father who sent me, notwithstanding I have confirmed my mission by the most astonishing miracles. One thing only remains now to be done, i.e. to send them the Holy Spirit, to convince them of sin, righteousness, and

judgment; and this he shall do, not only by his influence upon their hearts, but also by your words: and when they shall have resisted this Spirit, then the cup of their iniquity shall be filled up, and wrath shall come upon them to the uttermost.

BUT in what sense can it be said that Christ wrought more miracles than any other had done, John 15:24?-for Elijah and Elisha raised the dead; cured diseases; and made fire to come down from heaven. Did Christ do greater miracles than Moses did in Egypt-at the Red Sea-at the rock of Horeb, and at the rock of Kadesh? Did Christ do greater miracles than Joshua did, in the destruction of Jericho-in the passage of Jordan-in causing the sun and moon to stand still? To all this it may be answered, Christ's miracles were greater: 1. As to their number. 2. As to their utility-they were wrought to comfort the distressed, and to save the lost. 3. Christ wrought all his miracles by his own power alone; and they wrought theirs through his power only. 4. Christ wrought his numerous miracles in the space of three or four years, and in the presence of the same people; and the others mere wrought from time to time in different centuries.

Some critics have confined the whole of this chapter to the apostles of our Lord, and the work of propagating Christianity to which they had been called. The whole comment of Rosenmuller on this chapter proceeds on this plan; and at once shows how nugatory it is. What learned labor has there been in the world, to banish the spirit of Christianity from the earth, while the letter was professed to be scrupulously regarded! 1. The spiritual union spoken of by Christ is not merely necessary for his primitive disciples, but also for all who would be Christians on earth, and beatified spirits in heaven. 2. The brotherly love here inculcated is the duty and interest of every Christian soul on the face of the earth. 3. The necessity of adorning the Christian profession, by bringing forth corresponding fruits, is the duty of all who name the name of the Lord Jesus. 4. The appointment to, and preparation for, the work of the sacred ministry, must ever be primarily with Christ: for those who have no higher authority than that which they derive from man are never likely to be useful in Christianizing the world. 5. The persecution to which the apostles were exposed has been the common lot of Christians from the foundation of Christianity. 6. The consolations and influences of Christ's

Spirit have not been the exclusive privileges of the apostles; they are the birthright of all the sons and daughters of God.

## CHAPTER 16.

*Christ warns his disciples, and foretells the persecutions they should receive from the Jews, 1-4. Foretells his death, and promises them the Comforter, 5-7. Points out his operations among the Jews, and in the world, 8-11. His peculiar influences on the souls of the disciples, 12-15. Speaks figuratively of his death and resurrection, at which his disciples are puzzled, 16-18. He explains and illustrates the whole by a similitude, 19-22. Shows himself to be the Mediator between God and man, and that all prayers must be put up in his name, 23-28. The disciples clearly comprehend his meaning and express their strong faith in him, 29, 30. He again foretells their persecution, and promises them his peace and support, 31-33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16.

**Verse 1.** *These things have I spoken*— Particularly what is mentioned in the two last chapters.

*Be offended.*— *ἵνα μὴ σκανδαλισθητε*, That ye should not be stumbled. May not fall away from the faith, nor receive any injury to your souls, as that man does to his body who stumbles, or falls over a stone, or block, in the way which he has not discovered.

**Verse 2.** *They shall put you out of the synagogues*— They will excommunicate you, and consider you as execrable, and utterly unworthy to hold any commerce with God by religion; or with man by civil fellowship. See on John 9:22. In these excommunications they were spoiled of all their substance, see Ezra 10:8, and see also Hebrews 10:34, and deprived of their character, their influence, and every necessary of life. Though the Jewish people had the most humane laws, yet they were a most vindictive and cruel people.

*That whosoever killeth you*, etc.— This Paul found; for more than forty Jews bound themselves under a curse that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him, Acts 23:12, 13; and agreeably to this, it is said, in

that Tract of the Talmud which is entitled Bammidbar, R. xxi. ad. Numbers 25:13: “He who sheds the blood of the ungodly, is equal to him who brings an offering to God.” What the Zealots did is notorious in history. They butchered any person, in cold blood, who, they pretended to believe, was an enemy to God, to the law, or to Moses; and thought they were fulfilling the will of God by these human sacrifices. We had the same kind of sacrifices here in the time of our Popish Queen Mary. May God ever save our state from the Stuarts!

**Verse 3. *Because they have not known the Father***— See on John 15:25. Ignorance of the benevolence of GOD, and of the philanthropy of CHRIST, is the grand fountain whence all religious persecution and intolerance proceed.

**Verse 4. *At the beginning***— I would not trouble you by speaking of these things pointedly at first, when I chose you to be my disciples, but have referred them to the present time, lest you should be discouraged; and now only declare them because it is absolutely necessary that you should be put upon your guard.

**Verse 5. *None of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?***— In John 13:3, Peter had asked, Lord, thither goest thou?—and Thomas much the same in John 14:5, both of whom had received an answer. But now, at the time when Jesus was speaking this, none of them asked this question, because their hearts were filled with sorrow: John 16:6.

**Verse 7. *It is expedient that I go away***— In other places he had showed them the absolute necessity of his death for the salvation of men: see Matthew 20:19; 26:2; Mark 9:31; 10:33, Luke 9:44; 18:32. This he does not repeat here, but shows them that, by the order of God, the Holy Spirit cannot come to them, nor to the world, unless he first die; and consequently men cannot be saved but in this way.

**Verse 8. *He will reprove***— ελεγεξει, He will demonstrate these matters so clearly as to leave no doubt on the minds of those who are simple of heart; and so fully as to confound and shut the mouths of those who are gainsayers. See Acts 2:1, etc.

***The world***— The Jewish nation first, and afterwards the Gentile world; for his influences shall not be confined to one people, place, or time.

**Verse 9. *Of sin***— Of the sin of the Jews in not receiving me as the Messiah, though my mission was accredited by the very miracles which the prophets foretold: see Isaiah 35:3-6. This was literally fulfilled on the day of pentecost, when the Spirit was given; for multitudes of Jews were then convinced of this sin, and converted to God. See Acts 2:37.

If we take this prediction of our Lord in a more general sense, then we may consider that it is one of the grand offices of the Holy Spirit to convince of sin, to show men what sin is, to demonstrate to them that they are sinners, and to show the necessity of an atonement for sin; and in this sense the phrase, *περι αμαρτιας*, may be understood, and in this sense it is used in multitudes of places in the Septuagint, but the words, because they believe not in me, restrict the meaning particularly to the sin of the Jews in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah.

**Verse 10. *Of righteousness***— Of my innocence and holiness, because I go away to my Father; of which my resurrection from the dead, and my ascension to heaven, shall be complete proofs. Christ was treated by the Jews as an impostor; as a magician; as one possessed by the devil; as a wicked person, seducer, and destroyer of the law. His vindication from these charges he chiefly referred to the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, who, by his influences on the minds of the people, and by his eloquence and energy in the ministry of the apostles, convinced both the Jews and the Gentiles that the sentence of the Jewish rulers was unjust and infamous, and that the very person whom they had crucified was both Lord and Christ-Lord, the great governor of the universe; and Christ, the Lord's anointed, the promised Messiah. It was a matter of the utmost consequence to the Christian cause to have the innocence and holiness of its founder demonstrated, and the crime of the Jews in putting him to death made manifest to the world. This also has been literally fulfilled: the universe that has heard of him believes the righteousness and innocence of Jesus; and the Jews, his persecutors, are confounded and execrated throughout the habitable globe.

**Verse 11. *Of judgment***— Of the false judgment of the Jews in condemning the Lord Jesus, who, as some think, is intended here by the ruler of this world: see John 14:30. Others think that Satan is meant whose usurped power over the world was now to be greatly restrained, and by

and by totally destroyed: see John 12:31; Colossians 2:15; Revelation 11:15; 12:10, 11. Perhaps our Lord's meaning is, that as a most astonishing judgement, or punishment, was now about to fall upon the Jews, in consequence of their obstinate infidelity, the Holy Ghost, by the ministry of the apostles, should demonstrate that this judgment, severe as it might seem, was amply merited by this worst of all people; and may we not say that their continuance in the same crime sufficiently vindicates the judgment of God, not only in its being poured out upon them at first, but in continuing to pursue them?

It is necessary to observe that it was one office of the Spirit to convince of a judgment to come; and this he did particularly by the apostles, in declaring that God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world by him whom he had appointed for that purpose: Acts 17:31. And we find that while Peter was asserting this doctrine at Caesarea, Acts 10:42, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews and the Gentiles which were present, John 16:44, etc., and many were converted unto the Lord.

One general exposition may be given of these three verses. The Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin committed, and guilt and condemnation thereby incurred. Of righteousness-of the necessity of being pardoned, and made righteous through the blood of the Lamb, who, after being offered up for sin, went to the Father, ever to appear in his presence as our intercessor: and of judgment-of the great day thereof, when none shall be able to stand but those whose sins are pardoned, and whose souls are made righteous. In all that our Lord says here, there seems to be an allusion to the office of an advocate in a cause, in a court of justice; who, by producing witnesses, and pleading upon the proof, convicts the opposite party of sin, demonstrates the righteousness of his client, and shows the necessity of passing judgment upon the accuser.

The faith of the Gospel discovers unto us three different states of man: it shows him: 1. Under sin, in which there is nothing but infidelity towards God, because there is no faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Under grace, in which sin is pardoned, and righteousness acquired by faith in Christ; who is gone to the Father to carry on, by his intercession, the great work of redemption.



3. In the peace and glory of heaven, where Christ will reign with his members; the devil, with his angels and servants, being banished into hell by the last judgment.

Thus, in the Christian revelation, we are made acquainted with three grand truths, which contain the sum and substance of all true religion.

The first is the general corruption of human nature, and the reign of sin till the coming of Christ.

The second is the reparation of our nature by the Lord Jesus, and the reign of righteousness by his grace: Romans 5:21.

The third is the condemnation of sinners, and the total destruction of the kingdom of sin, and of all the power of the devil, by the last judgment.

**Verse 12. *Ye cannot bear them now.***— In illustration of these three points, Christ had many things to say; but he found that his disciples could only bear general truths; yet, in saying what he did, he sowed the seeds of the whole system of theological knowledge, and heavenly wisdom, which the Holy Spirit of this truth afterwards watered and ripened into a glorious harvest of light and salvation, by the ministry of the apostles. Dr. Lightfoot supposes that the things which the apostles could not bear now were such as these:

1. The institution of the Christian Sabbath, and the abolition of the Jewish.
2. The rejection of the whole Jewish nation, at the very time in which they expected to be set up and established for ever.
3. The entire change of the whole Mosaic dispensation, and the bringing the Gentiles into the Church of God.

**Verse 13. *He will guide you***— He will consider your feeble infant state; and, as a father leads his child by the hand, so will the Holy Spirit lead and guide you.

The Vulgate, and some copies of the Itala, read, He will TEACH you all truth; but this and more is implied in the word *οδηγησει*, he will lead; besides, this reading is not acknowledged by any Greek MS.

***He shall not speak of himself***— He shall teach nothing contrary to what I have taught you:

***But whatsoever he shall hear***— Of the Father and me, that he shall speak, and thus show the intimate consent between himself, the Father, and Christ. It is one conjoint testimony, in which the honor and glory of the holy Trinity, and man's salvation are equally concerned.

***And he will show you things to come.***— He will fully explain every thing that may now appear dark or difficult to you; will give you such a knowledge of futurity as shall, in all necessary cases, enable you to foretell future events; and shall supply every requisite truth, in order to make the new covenant revelation complete and perfect.

**Verse 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine***— If Christ had not been equal to God, could he have said this without blasphemy?

***And show it unto you.***— As Christ is represented the Ambassador of the Father, so the Holy Spirit is represented the ambassador of the Son, coming vested with his authority, as the interpreter and executor of his will.

**Verse 16. *A little while***— He had but a few hours to live.

***And ye shall not see me***— I shall be hidden from your view in the grave.

***Again a little while***— In three days after my death:

***Ye shall see me***— I will rise again, and show myself to you. Or, As I am going by my ascension to the Father, in a short time, ye shall see me personally no more; but in a little while I shall pour out my Spirit upon you, and others through your ministry; and ye shall see me virtually in the great and wonderful work which shall then take place in the hearts and lives of men.

This may also refer to his coming again to destroy the Jewish state, and also to judge the world; but how can this latter be said to be in a little while? Because a thousand years are but as a day in the sight of God: Psalm 90:4.

**Verse 18. *What is this that he saith***— They knew from what he had said that he was to die, but knew not what he meant by their seeing him again in a little time.

**Verse 20. *Ye shall weep and lament***— To see me crucified and laid in the grave.

***But the world shall rejoice***— The chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, and persecuting Jews in general, will triumph, hoping that their bad cause is crowned with success.

***But your sorrow shall be turned into joy.***— When ye see me risen from the dead.

It is very evident that our Lord uses the word world, in several parts of this discourse of his, to signify the unbelieving and rebellious Jews.

**Verse 21. *For joy that a man is born***— *ἄνθρωπος* is put here for a human creature, whether male or female; as homo among the Romans denoted either man or woman.

**Verse 22. *Your joy no man taketh from you.***— Or, shall take away. Some excellent MSS. and versions read the verb in the future tense. Our Lord's meaning appears to have been this: that his resurrection should be so completely demonstrated to them, that they should never have a doubt concerning it; and consequently that their joy should be great and permanent, knowing that the atonement was made, the victory gained, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers. Therefore it is said, Acts 4:33, that with great power did the apostles give witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

**Verse 23. *Ye shall ask me nothing.***— Ye shall then be led, by that Spirit which guides into all truth, to consider me in the character of Mediator in the kingdom of God, and to address your prayers to the Father in my name—in the name of Jesus the Savior, because I have died to redeem you—in the name of Christ the Anointer, because I have ascended to send down the gift of the Holy Ghost.

**Verse 24. *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name***— Ye have not as yet considered me the great Mediator between God and man; but this is

one of the truths which shall be more fully revealed to you by the Holy Spirit.

*Ask*— In my name; and ye shall receive—all the salvation ye thus request; the consequence of which shall be that your joy shall be full—ye shall be thoroughly happy in being made completely holy.

**Verse 25. *In Proverbs***— That is, words which, besides their plain, literal meaning, have another, viz. a spiritual or figurative one. I have represented heavenly things to you through the medium of earthly.

*The time cometh*— viz. the interval from his resurrection to his ascension, which consisted of forty days, during which he instructed his disciples in the most sublime mysteries and truths of his kingdom. Acts 1:3.

**Verse 26. *I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you***— I need not tell you that I will continue your intercessor: I have given you already so many proofs of my love that ye cannot possibly doubt this: besides, the Father himself needs no entreaty to do you good, for he loves you, and is graciously disposed to save you to the uttermost, because ye have loved me and believed in me as coming from God, for the salvation of the world.

**Verse 28. *I came forth from the Father***— With whom I existed from eternity in glory.

*Am come into the world*— By my incarnation.

*I leave the world*— By my death.

*And go to the Father.*— By my ascension. These four words contain the whole economy of the Gospel of man's salvation, and a consummate abridgment of the Christian faith. This gave the disciples a key to the whole of our Lord's discourse; and especially to that part, John 16:16, that had so exceedingly embarrassed them, as appears by John 16:17, 18.

**Verse 29. *Lo, now speakest thou plainly***— The disciples received more light now, on the nature of Christ's person and office, than they had ever done before.

**Verse 30. *Now are we sure that thou knowest all things***— Is not the following the meaning of the disciples? We believe that thou art not only the Messiah who camest out from God, but that thou art that God who

searchest the heart and triest the reins, and needest not to be asked in order to make thee acquainted with the necessities of thy creatures; for thou perfectly knowest their wants, and art infinitely disposed to relieve them.

**Verse 31. *Do ye now believe?***— And will ye continue to believe? Ye are now fully convinced; and will ye in the hour of trial retain your conviction, and prove faithful and steady?

**Verse 32. *The hour cometh***— Ye shall shortly have need of all the faith ye profess: ye now believe me to be the Omniscient; but ye will find difficulty to maintain this faith when ye see me seized, condemned, and crucified as a malefactor. Yea, your faith will be then so shaken that ye shall run away, each striving to save himself at his own home, or among his kindred.

**Verse 33. *That in me ye might have peace.***— I give you this warning as another proof that I know all things, and to the end that ye may look to me alone for peace and happiness. The peace of God is ever to be understood as including all possible blessedness—light, strength, comfort, support, a sense of the Divine favor, unction of the Holy Spirit, purification of heart, etc., etc., and all these to be enjoyed in Christ.

***In the world ye shall have tribulation***— Or, as most of the very best MSS. read, *εχete*, ye have—the tribulation is at hand; ye are just about to be plunged into it.

***But be of good cheer***— Do not despond on account of what I have said: the world shall not be able to overcome you, how severely soever it may try you.

***I have overcome the world.***— I am just now going by my death to put it and its god to the rout.

My apparent weakness shall be my victory; my ignominy shall be my glory; and the victory which the world, the devil, and my adversaries in general, shall appear to gain over me, shall be their own lasting defeat, and my eternal triumph.—Fear not!

Luther writing to Philip Melancthon, quotes this verse, and adds these remarkable words: “Such a saying as this is worthy to be carried from Rome to Jerusalem upon one’s knees.”

ONE of the grand subjects in this chapter, the mediation of Christ, is but little understood by most Christians. Christ having made an atonement for the sin of the world, has ascended to the right hand of the Father, and there he appears in the presence of God for us. In approaching the throne of grace, we keep Jesus as our sacrificial victim, continually in view: our prayers should be directed through him to the Father; and, under the conviction that his passion and death have purchased every possible blessing for us, we should, with humble confidence, ask the blessings we need; and, as in him the Father is ever well pleased, we should most confidently expect the blessings he has purchased. We may consider, also, that his appearance before the throne, in his sacrificial character, constitutes the great principle of mediation or intercession. He has taken our nature into heaven; in that he appears before the throne: this, without a voice, speaks loudly for the sinful race of Adam, for whom it was assumed, and on whose account it was sacrificed. On these grounds every penitent and every believing soul may ask and receive, and their joy be complete. By the sacrifice of Christ we approach God; through the mediation of Christ God comes down to man.

## CHAPTER 17.

*Christ prays the Father to glorify him, 1. In what eternal life consists, 2-3. Shows that he has glorified his Father, by fulfilling his will upon earth, and revealing him to the disciples, 4-8. Prays for them, that they may be preserved in unity and kept from evil, 9-16. Prays for their sanctification, 17-19. Prays also for those who should believe on him through their preaching, that they all might be brought into a state of unity, and finally brought to eternal glory, 20-26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17.

**Verse 1.** *These words spake Jesus*— That is, what is related in the preceding chapters. We may consider our Lord as still moving on towards Gethsemane, not having yet passed the brook Cedron, John 18:1.

Our Lord, who was now going to act as high priest for the whole human race, imitates in his conduct that of the Jewish high priest on the great day of expiation; who, in order to offer up the grand atonement for the sins of the people: —

1. Washed himself, and put on clean linen garments. This Christ appears to have imitated, John 13:4. He laid aside his garments, girded himself with a towel, etc. There is no room to doubt that he and his disciples had been at the bath before: see John 13:10.

2. The high priest addressed a solemn prayer to God: 1. For himself this Christ imitates, John 17:1-5. 2. For the sons of Aaron: our Lord imitates this in praying for his disciples, John 17:9-19. 3. For all the people: our Lord appears to imitate this also in praying for his Church, all who should believe on him through the preaching of the apostles and their successors, John 17:20-24. After which he returns again to his disciples, John 17:25, 26. See CALMET'S Dict. under Expiation; and see Lamentations Grande Bible de M. MARTIN, in loc.

I. Our Lord's prayer for himself, John 17:1-5.

**Father**— Here our Lord addresses the whole Divine nature, as he is now performing his last acts in his state of humiliation.

**Glorify thy Son**— Cause him to be acknowledged as the promised Messiah by the Jewish people, and as the universal Savior by the Gentile world; and let such proofs of his Godhead be given as shall serve to convince and instruct mankind.

**That thy son also may glorify thee**— That by dying he may magnify thy law and make it honorable, respected among men—show the strictness of thy justice, and the immaculate purity of thy nature.

**Verse 2. As thou hast given him power**— As the Messiah, Jesus Christ received from the Father universal dominion. All flesh, i.e. all the human race, was given unto him, that by one sacrifice of himself, he might reconcile them all to God; having by his grace tasted death for every man, Hebrews 2:9. And this was according to the promise of the universal inheritance made to Christ, Psalm 2:8, which was to be made up of the heathen, and the uttermost parts of the land, all the Jewish people. So that he got all from God, that he might give his life a ransom for the whole. See 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15; Romans 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:4, 6.

**That he should have eternal life**, etc.— As all were delivered into his power, and he poured out his blood to redeem all, then the design of God is that all should have eternal life, because all are given for this purpose to Christ; and, that this end might be accomplished, he has become their sacrifice and atonement.

**Verse 3. This is life eternal**— The salvation purchased by Christ, and given to them who believe, is called life: 1. Because the life of man was forfeited to Divine justice; and the sacrifice of Christ redeemed him from that death to which he was exposed. 2. Because the souls of men were dead in trespasses and sins; and Christ quickens them by his word and Spirit. 3. Because men who are not saved by the grace of Christ do not live, they only exist, no good purpose of life being answered by them. But when they receive this salvation they live—answer all the Divine purposes, are happy in themselves, useful to each other, and bring glory to God. 4. It is called eternal life to show that it reaches beyond the limits of time, and that it necessarily implies—1. The immortality of the soul; 2. the



resurrection of the body; and that it is never to end, hence called **αιωνιος ζωνη**, a life ever living; from **αιει**, always, and **ων**, being or existence. And indeed no words can more forcibly convey the idea of eternity than these. It is called **η αιωνιος ζωνη**, THAT eternal life, by way of eminence. There may be an eternal existence without blessedness; but this is that eternal life with which infinite happiness is inseparably connected.

***The only true God***— The way to attain this eternal life is to acknowledge, worship, and obey, the one only true God, and to accept as teacher, sacrifice, and Savior, the Lord Jesus, the one and only true Messiah. Bishop Pearce's remark here is well worthy the reader's attention: —

“What is said here of the only true God seems said in opposition to the gods whom the heathens worshipped; not in opposition to Jesus Christ himself, who is called the true God by John, in 1 John 5:20.”

The words in this verse have been variously translated: 1. That they might acknowledge thee, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, to be the only true God. 2. That they might acknowledge thee, the only true God, and Jesus, whom thou hast sent, to be the Christ or Messiah. 3. That they might acknowledge thee to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ to be him whom thou hast sent. And all these translations the original will bear. From all this we learn that the only way in which eternal life is to be attained is by acknowledging the true God, and the Divine mission of Jesus Christ, he being sent of God to redeem men by his blood, being the author of eternal salvation to all them that thus believe, and conscientiously keep his commandments.

A saying similar to this is found in the Institutes of Menu. Brigoo, the first emanated being who was produced from the mind of the supreme God, and who revealed the knowledge of his will to mankind, is represented as addressing the human race and saying: “Of all duties, the principal is to acquire from the Upanishads (their sacred writings) a true knowledge of one supreme God; that is the most exalted of sciences, because it ensures eternal life. For in the knowledge and adoration of one God all the rules of good conduct are fully comprised.” See Institutes of Menu, chap. xii. Inst. 85, 87.

**Verse 4. *I have glorified thee***— Our Lord, considering himself as already sacrificed for the sin of the world, speaks of having completed the work which God had given him to do: and he looks forward to that time when, through the preaching of his Gospel, his sacrifice should be acknowledged, and the true God should be known and worshipped by the whole world.

**Verse 5. *Before the world was***.— That is, from eternity, before there was any creation—so the phrase, and others similar to it, are taken in the sacred writings; see John 17:24; Psalm 90:2; Ephesians 1:4. See John 1:1. Let the glory of my eternal divinity surround and penetrate my humanity, in its resurrection, ascension, and in the place which it is to occupy at thy right hand, far above all creatures, Philippians 2:6, 9.

II. Our Lord's prayer for his disciples, John 17:6, 19.

**Verse 6. *I have manifested thy name***— *εφανερωσα*, I have brought it into light, and caused it to shine in itself, and to illuminate others. A little of the Divine nature was known by the works of creation; a little more was known by the Mosaic revelation: but the full manifestation of God, his nature, and his attributes, came only through the revelation of Christ.

***The men which thou gavest me***— That is, the apostles, who, having received this knowledge from Christ, were, by their preaching and writings, to spread it through the whole world.

***Out of the world***— From among the Jewish people; for in this sense is the word *κοσμος* to be understood in various parts of our Lord's last discourses.

***Thine they were***— Objects of thy choice; and thou gavest them to me from among this very unbelieving people, that they might be my disciples and the heralds of my salvation.

***And they have kept thy word***.— Though their countrymen have rejected it; and they have received me as thy well beloved Son in whom thou delightest.

**Verse 8. *I have given-them the words***— I have delivered thy doctrine to them, so that they have had a pure teaching immediately from heaven: neither Jewish fables nor fictions of men have been mingled with it.

***And have known surely***— Are fully convinced and acknowledge that I am the promised Messiah, and that they are to look for none other; and that my mission and doctrine are all Divine, John 17:7, 8.

**Verse 9. *I pray not for the world***— I am not yet come to that part of my intercession: see John 17:20. I am now wholly employed for my disciples, that they may be properly qualified to preach my salvation to the ends of the earth. Jesus here imitates the high priest, the second part of whose prayer, on the day of expiation, was for the priests, the sons of Aaron: see on John 17:1. These words may also be understood as applying to the rebellious Jews. God's wrath was about to descend upon them, and Christ prays that his own followers might be kept from the evil, John 17:15. But he does not thus pray for the world, the rebellious Jews, because the cup of their iniquity was full, and their judgment slumbered not.

**Verse 10. *I am glorified in them.***— Christ speaks of the things which were not, but which should be, as though they were. He anticipates the glorifying of his name by the successful preaching of the apostles.

**Verse 11. *I am no more in the world***— I am just going to leave the world, and therefore they shall stand in need of peculiar assistance and support. They have need of all the influence of my intercession, that they may be preserved in thy truth.

***Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me***— Instead of οὓς δέδωκάς μοι, THOSE whom thou hast given me, ABCEHLMS, Mt. BHV, and nearly one hundred others, read ω, which refers to the τὸ ὄνοματι σου, thy name, immediately preceding. The whole passage should be read thus: Holy Father, keep them through thy own name WHICH thou hast given me, that they may be one, etc. By the name, here, it is evident that the doctrine or knowledge of the true God is intended; as if our Lord had said, Keep them in that doctrine WHICH thou hast given me, that they may be one, etc. This reading is supported by the most ample evidence and indisputable authority. Griesbach has admitted it into the text, and Professor White in his χρισσεως says of it, Lectio indubie genuina, "It is, without doubt, the genuine reading."

***That they may be ONE***— That they, and all that believe through their word, (the doctrine which I have given them,) may be one body, united by

one Spirit to me their living head. The union which Christ recommends here, and prays for, is so complete and glorious as to be fitly represented by that union which subsists between the Father and the Son.

**Verse 12. *I kept them in thy name***— In thy doctrine and truth.

***But the son of perdition***— So we find that Judas, whom all account to have been lost, and whose case at best is extremely dubious, was first given by God to Christ? But why was he lost? Because, says St. Augustin, he would not be saved: and he farther adds, After the commission of his crime, he might have returned to God and have found mercy. Aug. Serm. 125; n. 5; Psalm 146. n. 20; Ser. 352, n. 8; and in Psa. cviii. See Calmet, who remarks: Judas only became the son of perdition because of his wilful malice, his abuse of the grace and instructions of Christ, and was condemned through his own avarice, perfidy, insensibility, and despair. In behalf of the mere possibility of the salvation of Judas, see the observations at the end of Acts 1. {Acts 1:26}

Perdition or destruction is personified; and Judas is represented as being her son, i.e. one of the worst of men—one whose crime appears to have been an attempt to destroy, not only the Savior of the world, but also the whole human race. And all this he was capable of through the love of money! How many of those who are termed creditable persons in the world have acted his crime over a thousand times! To Judas and to all his brethren, who sell God and their souls for money, and who frequently go out of this world by a violent voluntary death, we may apply those burning words of Mr. Blair, with very little alteration:

*“O cursed lust of gold! when for thy sake  
The wretch throws up his interest in both worlds,  
First hanged in this, then damned in that to come.”*

***That the scripture might be fulfilled.***— Or, Thus the scripture is fulfilled: see Psalm 41:9; 109:8; compared with Acts 1:20. Thus the traitorous conduct of Judas has been represented and illustrated by that of Ahitophel, and the rebellion of Absalom against his father David. Thus what was spoken concerning them was also fulfilled in Judas: to him therefore these scriptures are properly applied, though they were originally spoken concerning other traitors. Hence we plainly see that the treachery of Judas was not the effect of the prediction, for that related to a

different case; but, as his was of the same nature with that of the others, to it the same scriptures were applicable.

**Verse 13. *My joy fulfilled in themselves.***— See on John 15:11.

**Verse 14. *I have given them thy word***— Or, thy doctrine-του λογον σου. In this sense the word λογος is often used by St. John.

***And the world hath hated them***— The Jewish rulers, etc., have hated them.-Why? Because they received the doctrine of God, the science of salvation, and taught it to others. They knew Jesus to be the Messiah, and as such they proclaimed him: our Lord speaks prophetically of what was about to take place. How terrible is the perversion of human nature! Men despise that which they should esteem, and endeavor to destroy that without which they must be destroyed themselves!

**Verse 15. *That thou shouldest take them out of the world***— They must not yet leave the land of Judea: they had not as yet borne their testimony there, concerning Christ crucified and risen again from the dead. To take them away before this work was finished would not answer the gracious design of God.-1. Christ does not desire that his faithful apostles should soon die, and be taken to God. No: but that they may live long, labor long, and bring forth much fruit. 2. He does not intimate that they should seclude themselves from the world by going to the desert, or to the cloisters; but that they should continue in and among the world, that they may have the opportunity of recommending the salvation of God. 3. Christ only prays that while they are in the world, employed in the work of the ministry, they may be preserved from the influence, του πονηρου, of the evil one, the devil, who had lately entered into Judas, John 13:27, and who would endeavor to enter into them, ruin their souls, and destroy their work. A devil without can do no harm; but a devil within ruins all.

**Verse 17. *Sanctify them***— ἁγιασον, from α, negative, and ηη, the earth. This word has two meanings: 1. It signifies to consecrate, to separate from earth and common use, and to devote or dedicate to God and his service. 2. It signifies to make holy or pure. The prayer of Christ may be understood in both these senses. He prayed-1. That they might be fully consecrated to the work of the ministry, and separated from all worldly concerns. 2. That they might be holy, and patterns of all holiness to those to whom they

announced the salvation of God. A minister who engages himself in worldly concerns is a reproach to the Gospel; and he who is not saved from his own sins can with a bad grace recommend salvation to others.

**Through thy truth**— It is not only according to the truth of God that ministers are to be set apart to the sacred work; but it is from that truth, and according to it, that they must preach to others. That doctrine which is not drawn from the truth of God can never save souls. God blesses no word but his own; because none is truth, without mixture of error, but that which has proceeded from himself. Our Lord still acts here in reference to the conduct of the high priest, to whom it belonged to sanctify the priests, the sons of Aaron: see on John 17:1.

**Verse 18. *As thou hast sent me-so have I also sent them***— The apostles had the same commission which Christ had, considered as man—they were endued with the same Spirit, so that they could not err, and their word was accompanied with the same success.

**Verse 19. *I sanctify myself***— I consecrate and devote myself to death—that I may thereby purchase eternal salvation for them. There seems to be here an allusion to the entering of the high priest into the holy of holies, when, having offered the sacrifice, he sprinkled the blood before the ark of the covenant. So Jesus entered into the holiest of all by his own blood, in order to obtain everlasting redemption for men: see Hebrews 9:11-13. The word, **αγιαζω**, to consecrate or sanctify, is used in the sense of devoting to death, in Jeremiah 12:3, both in the Hebrew and in the Septuagint: the Hebrew **שָׁדַק** signifies also to sacrifice.

III. Our Lord's prayer for his Church, and for all who would believe on his name, through the preaching of the apostles and their successors: see on John 17:1.

**Verse 20. *Neither pray I for these alone***— This prayer extends itself through all ages, and takes in every soul that believes in the Lord Jesus.

And what is it that Christ asks in behalf of his followers? The greatest of blessings: unity, peace, love, and eternal glory.

**Verse 21. *That they all may be one***— This prayer was literally answered to the first believers, who were all of one heart and of one soul: Acts 4:39.

And why is it that believers are not in the same spirit now? Because they neither attend to the example nor to the truth of Christ.

***That the world may believe***— are have already seen that the word, **κοσμος**, world, is used in several parts of this last discourse of our Lord to signify the Jewish people only.

Christ will have all his members to be one in spirit—one in rights and privileges, and one in the blessedness of the future world.

**Verse 22. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them***— That is, the power to work miracles, and to preach unadulterated truth, say some; but as our Lord is not here praying for the disciples, but for all those who should believe on him through their word, John 17:20, it is more natural to understand the passage thus. As Christ, according to his human nature, is termed the Son of God, he may be understood as saying: “I have communicated to all those who believe, or shall believe in me, the glorious privilege of becoming sons of God; that, being all adopted children of the same Father, they may abide in peace, love, and unity.” For this reason it is said, Hebrews 2:11, Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren. However, our Lord may here, as in several other places, be using the past for the future; and the words may therefore be understood of the glory which they were to share with him in heaven.

**Verse 23. *That the world may know***— That the Jewish people first, and secondly the Gentiles, may acknowledge me as the true Messiah, and be saved unto life eternal.

**Verse 24. *That they may behold my glory***— That they may enjoy eternal felicity with me in thy kingdom. So the word is used, John 3:3; Matthew 5:8. The design of Christ is, that all who believe should love and obey, persevere unto the end, and be eternally united to himself, and the ever blessed God, in the kingdom of glory.

**Verse 25. *The world hath not known thee***— Has not acknowledged me. See on John 1:11, 12.

***And these have known***— Here our Lord, returning to the disciples, speaks: 1st. Of their having received him as the Messiah; 2dly. Of his making the Father known unto them; 3dly. Of his purpose to continue to

influence them by the Spirit of truth, that they might be perfectly united to God, by an indwelling Savior for ever.

**Verse 26.** *I have declared unto them thy name*, etc.— I have taught them the true doctrine.

*And will declare it*— This he did: 1st. By the conversations he had with his disciples after his resurrection, during the space of forty days. 2dly. By the Holy Spirit which was poured out upon them on the day of pentecost. And all these declarations Jesus Christ made, that the love of God, and Christ Jesus himself, might dwell in them; and thus they were to become a habitation for God through the eternal Spirit.

OUR Lord's sermon, which he concluded by the prayer recorded in this chapter, begins at John 13:13, and is one of the most excellent than can be conceived. His sermon on the mount shows men what they should do, so as to please God: this sermon shows them how they are to do the things prescribed in the other. In the former the reader sees a strict morality which he fears he shall never be able to perform: in this, he sees all things are possible to him who believes; for that very God who made him shall dwell in his heart, and enable him to do all that He pleases to employ him in. No man can properly understand the nature and design of the religion of Christ who does not enter into the spirit of the preceding discourse. Perhaps no part of our Lord's words has been less understood, or more perverted, than the seventeenth chapter of St. John. I have done what I could, in so small a compass, to make every thing plain, and to apply these words in that way in which I am satisfied he used them.



## CHAPTER 18.

*Jesus passes the brook Cedron, and goes to the garden of Gethsemane, 1. Judas, having betrayed him, comes to the place with a troop of men to take him, 2, 3. Jesus addresses them, and they fall to the ground, 4-6. He addresses them again, and Peter smites Malchus, 7-11. They seize him and lead him away to Caiaphas, 12-14. Peter follows to the palace of the high priest, 15-18. The high priest questions Christ concerning his doctrine, and Jesus answers, and is smitten, 19-23. Peter denies his Lord twice, 24-27. Jesus is led to the judgment hall, and Pilate and the Jews converse about him, 28-32. Pilate converses with Jesus, who informs him of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, 33-37. Pilate returns to the Jews, and declares Christ to be innocent, 38. He seeks to discharge him, and the Jews clamor for his condemnation, 39. 40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18.

**Verse 1. *Over the brook Cedron***— Having finished the prayer related in the preceding chapter, our Lord went straight to the garden of Gethsemane, Matthew 26:36, which was in the mount of Olives, eastward of Jerusalem. This mount was separated from the city by a very narrow valley, through the midst of which the brook Cedron ran: see 1 Macc. 12:37; Joseph. War, b. v. c. 2, s. 3. xii. 2. Cedron is a very small rivulet, about six or seven feet broad, nor is it constantly supplied with water, being dry all the year, except during the rains. It is mentioned in the Old Testament: 2 Samuel 15:23; 1 Kings 15:13; 2 Kings 23:4. And it appears the evangelist only mentions it here to call to remembrance what happened to David, when he was driven from Jerusalem by his son Absalom, and he and his followers obliged to pass the brook Cedron on foot: see 2 Samuel 15:23. All this was a very expressive figure of what happened now to this second David, by the treachery of one of his own disciples. This brook had its name probably from קדר Kadar, he was black; it being the place into which the blood of the sacrifices, and other filth of the city, ran. It was rather, says Lightfoot, the sink, or the common sewer, of the city, than a brook. Some

copyists, mistaking **κεδρων** for Greek, have changed **του** into **των**, and thus have written **των κεδρων**, of cedars, instead of **του κεδρων**, the brook of Cedron: but this last is undoubtedly the genuine reading.

**A garden**— Gethsemane: see on Matthew 26:36.

The Jewish grandees had their gardens and pleasure grounds without the city even in the mount of Olives. This is still a common custom among the Asiatics.

St. John mentions nothing of the agony in the garden; probably because he found it so amply related by all the other evangelists. As that account should come in here, the reader is desired to consult the notes on Matthew 26:36-47. See also Mark 14:30-36, and Luke 22:40-44.

**Verse 2. Judas-knew the place**— As many had come from different quarters to celebrate the passover at Jerusalem, it could not be an easy matter to find lodging in the city: Jesus therefore chose to pass the night in the garden with his disciples which, from this verse, and from Luke 22:39, we find was his frequent custom, though he often lodged in Bethany. But, as he had supped in the city this evening, Judas took it for granted that he had not gone to Bethany, and therefore was to be met with in the garden; and, having given this information to the priests, they gave him some soldiers and others that he might be the better enabled to seize and bring him away.

**Verse 3. A band**— **την σπειραν**, The band or troop. Some think that the spira was the same as the Roman cohort, and was the tenth part of a legion, which consisted sometimes of 4200, and sometimes of 5000 foot. But Raphelius, on Matthew 27:27, has clearly proved, from Polybius, that the spira was no more than a tenth of the fourth part of a legion. And as the number of the legion was uncertain, and their divisions not at all equal, no person can tell how many the band or spira contained. See many curious particulars in Raphelius on this point, vol. i. p. 351, edit. 1747. This band was probably those Roman soldiers given by the governor for the defense of the temple; and the officers were those who belonged to the Sanhedrin.

**With lanterns and torches**— With these they had intended to search the corners and caverns, provided Christ had hidden himself; for they could

not have needed them for any other purpose, it being now the fourteenth day of the moon's age, in the month Nisan, and consequently she appeared full and bright. The weapons mentioned here were probably no other than clubs, staves, and instruments of that kind, as we may gather from Matthew 26:55; Mark 14:48; Luke 22:52. The swords mentioned by the other evangelists were probably those of the Roman soldiers; the clubs and staves belonged to the chief priest's officers.

**Verse 4. *Jesus knowing all things***, etc.— He had gone through all his preaching, working of miracles, and passion, and had nothing to do now but to offer up himself on the cross; he therefore went forth to meet them, to deliver himself up to death.

**Verse 5. *Jesus of Nazareth***.— They did not say this till after Judas kissed Christ, which was the sign which he had agreed with the soldiers, etc., to give them, that they might know whom they were to seize: see Matthew 26:48. Though some harmonists place the kiss after what is spoken in the ninth verse.

**Verse 6. *They went backward, and fell to the ground***.— None of the other evangelists mentions this very important circumstance. Our Lord chose to give them this proof of his infinite power, that they might know that their power could not prevail against him if he chose to exert his might, seeing that the very breath of his mouth confounded, drove back, and struck them down to the earth. Thus by the blast of God they might have perished, and by the breath of his nostrils they might have been consumed: Job 4:9.

**Verse 8. *Let these go their way***— These words are rather words of authority, than words of entreaty. I voluntarily give myself up to you, but you must not molest one of these my disciples. At your peril injure them. Let them go about their business. I have already given you a sufficient proof of my power: I will not exert it in my own behalf, for I will lay down my life for the sheep; but I will not permit you to injure the least of these. It was certainly the supreme power of Christ that kept the soldiers and the mob from destroying all the disciples present, when Peter had given them such provocation, in cutting off the ear of Malchus. There were probably no other disciples with Christ than Peter, James, and John, at this time. see Matthew 26:37; Mark 13:33.

**Verse 10. *Having a sword***— See the note on Luke 22:36.

***Cut off his right ear.***— He probably designed to have cloven his scull in two, but God turned it aside, and only permitted the ear to be taken off; and this he would not have suffered, but only that he might have the opportunity of giving them a most striking proof of his Divinity in working an astonishing miracle on the occasion: see the notes on Matthew 26:51-56.

The other three evangelists mention this transaction; but neither give the name of Peter nor of Malchus, probably because both persons were alive when they wrote; but it is likely both had been long dead before St. John published his history.

**Verse 11. *The cup which my Father hath given me***— The cup signifies, sometimes the lot of life, whether prosperous or adverse: here it signifies the final sufferings of Christ.

**Verse 12. *The captain***— *χιλιάρχος*, The chiliarch, or chief over one thousand men—answering nearly to a colonel with us. See the note on Luke 22:4. He was probably the prefect or captain of the temple guard.

**Verse 13. *To Annas***— This man must have had great authority in his nation: 1. Because he had been a long time high priest; 2. Because he had no less than five sons who successively enjoyed the dignity of the high priesthood; and, 3. Because his son-in-law Caiaphas was at this time in possession of that office. It is likely that Annas was chief of the Sanhedrin, and that it was to him in that office that Christ was first brought. Some think that Annas was still high priest, and that Caiaphas was only his deputy, though he did the principal part of the business, and that it was because of this that he is called high priest. But see the notes on Matthew 2:4, and Luke 3:2.

***That same year.***— The office was now no longer during life as formerly. See the note on John 11:49.

What is related in the 24th verse, {John 18:24}, Now Annas had sent him bound to Caiaphas, comes properly in after the 13th verse. {John 18:13} One of the Vienna MSS. adds this verse here; the later Syriac has it in the margin, and St. Cyril in the text. See the margin.

**Verse 14.** *Caiaphas was he which gave counsel*, etc.— Therefore he was an improper person to sit in judgment on Christ, whom he had prejudged and precondemned: see on John 11:50-52. But Christ must not be treated according to the rules of justice: if he had, he could not have been put to death.

**Verse 15.** *And-another disciple*— Not THAT other disciple, for the article is omitted by AD, two others; some editions; Syriac, Persic, Gothic, and Nonnus. So the Vulgate is to be understood. There are many conjectures who this disciple was: Jerome, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Nonnus, Lyra, Erasmus, Piscator, and others, say it was John. It is true John frequently mentions himself in the third person; but then he has always, whom Jesus loved, as in John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20, except in John 19:35, where he has plainly pointed out himself as writer of this Gospel; but, in the place before us, he has mentioned no circumstance by which that disciple may be known to be John. To this may be added that John being not only a Galilean, but a fisherman by trade, it is not likely that he should have been known to the high priest, as it is here said of that disciple who followed Jesus with Peter. See Bishop Pearce and Calmet. The conjecture of Grotius is the most likely: viz. that it was the person at whose house Jesus had supped. St. Augustin, Tract. 113, speaks like a man of sound sense: We should not decide hastily, says he, on a subject concerning which the Scripture is silent.

**Verse 17.** *The damsel that kept the door*— Caezarius, a writer quoted by Calmet, says this portress was named Ballila. It is worthy of remark that women, especially old women, were employed by the ancients as porters. In 2 Samuel 4:6, both the Septuagint and Vulgate make a woman porter to Ishbosheth. ARISTOPHANES, in *Vespis*, v. 765, mentions them in the same office and calls them σηκίς, Sekis, which seems to signify a common maid-servant: —

οτι την θυραν ανεωξεν η σηκίς λαθρα.

And EURIPIDES, *Troad*. brings in Hecuba, complaining that she, who was wont to sit upon a throne, is now reduced to the miserable necessity of becoming a porter, or a nurse, in order to get a morsel of bread. And

PLAUTUS, *Curcul.* Act. i. sc. 1, mentions an old woman who was keeper of the gate: —

*Anus hic solet cubitare custos janitrix.*

Why they, in preference to men, should be pitched upon for this office, I cannot conceive; but we find the usage was common in all ancient nations. See the notes on Matthew 26:69.

**Verse 18. *Servants and officers***— These belonged to the chief priests, etc.; the Roman soldiers had probably been dismissed after having conducted Christ to Annas.

**Verse 19. *Asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.***— He probably asked him by what authority, or in virtue of what right, he collected disciples, formed a different sect, preached a new doctrine, and set himself up for a public reformer? As religion was interested in these things, the high priest was considered as being the proper judge. But all this, with what follows, was transacted by night, and this was contrary to established laws. For the Talmud states, Sanhed. c. iv. s. 1, that—"Criminal processes can neither commence nor terminate, but during the course of the day. If the person be acquitted, the sentence may be pronounced during that day; but, if he be condemned, the sentence cannot be pronounced till the next day. But no kind of judgment is to be executed, either on the eve of the Sabbath, or the eve of any festival." Nevertheless, to the lasting infamy of this people, Christ was judicially interrogated and condemned during the night; and on the night too of the passover, or, according to others, on the eve of that feast. Thus, as I have remarked before, all the forms of justice were insulted and outraged in the case of our Lord. In this his humiliation his judgment was taken away. See Acts 8:33.

**Verse 20. *I spake openly to the world***— To every person in the land indiscriminately—to the people at large: the *τω κοσμου*, here, is tantamount to the French *tout le monde*, all the world, i.e. every person within reach. This is another proof that St. John uses the term world to mean the Jewish people only; for it is certain our Lord did not preach to the Gentiles. The answer of our Lord, mentioned in this and the following verse, is such as became a person conscious of his own innocence, and confident in the righteousness of his cause. I have taught in the temple, in the synagogues,

in all the principal cities, towns, and villages, and through all the country. I have had no secret school. You and your emissaries have watched me every where. No doctrine has ever proceeded from my lips, but what was agreeable to the righteousness of the law and the purity of God. My disciples, when they have taught, have taught in the same way, and had the same witnesses. Ask those who have attended our public ministrations, and hear whether they can prove that I or my disciples have preached any false doctrines, have ever troubled society, or disturbed the state. Attend to the ordinary course of justice, call witnesses, let them make their depositions, and then proceed to judge according to the evidence brought before you.

**Verse 22. *One of the officers-struck Jesus***— This was an outrage to all justice: for a prisoner, before he is condemned, is ever considered to be under the especial protection of justice; nor has any one a right to touch him, but according to the direction of the law. But it has been observed before that, if justice had been done to Christ, he could neither have suffered nor died.

**Verse 24. *Now Annas had sent him***, etc.— It has been observed before that the proper place of this verse is immediately after the 13th; and, if it be allowed to stand here, it should be read in a parenthesis, and considered as a recapitulation of what had been before done.

**Verse 27. *And-the cock crew***.— Peter denied our Lord three times: — Peter's first denial.

I. This took place, when he was without, or beneath, in the hall of Caiaphas's house. He was not in the higher part where Christ stood before the high priest; but without that division of the hall, and in the lower part with the servants and officers, at the fire kindled in the midst of the hall, John 18:16, 18; and the girl who kept the door had entered into the hall, where she charged Peter.

Peter's second denial.

II. This was in a short time after the first, Luke 22:58. Having once denied his Master, he naturally retired from the place where his accuser was to the vestibule of the hall, Matthew 26:71, and it was the time of the first

cock-crowing, or soon after midnight. After remaining here a short time, perhaps an hour, another girl sees him, and says to them who were standing by in the vestibule, that he was one of them. Peter, to avoid this charge, withdraws into the hall, and warms himself. The girl, and those to whom she had spoken, follow him; the communication between the two places being immediate. Here a man enforces the charge of the girl, according to Luke; and others urge it, according to St. John; and Peter denies Jesus vehemently.

Peter's third denial.

III. He was now in the hall, and also within sight of Jesus, though at such a distance from him that Jesus could not know what passed, but in a supernatural way. And, about an hour after his second denial, those who stood by founded a third charge against him, on his being a Galilean, which St. Luke says, Luke 22:59, one in particular strongly affirmed; and which, according to John, John 18:26, was supported by one of Malchus's relations. This occasioned a more vehement denial than before, and immediately the cock crew the second time, which is eminently called **αλεκτοροφωνια**. The first denial may have been between our twelve and one; and the second between our two and three.

At the time of the third denial, Luke 22:61 proves that Jesus was in the same room with Peter. We must farther observe that Matthew, Matthew 26:57, lays the scene of Peter's denials in the house of Caiaphas: whereas John, John 18:15-23, seems to intimate that these transactions took place in the house of Annas; but this difficulty arises from the injudicious insertion of the particle **ουν**, therefore, in John 18:24, which should be omitted, on the authority of ADES, Mt. BH, many others; besides some versions, and some of the primitive fathers. Griesbach has left it out of the text. See Bishop Newcome's Harm. notes, p. 48.

The time of Peter's denials happened during the space of the third Roman watch, or that division of the night, between twelve and three, which is called **αλεκτοροφωνια**, or cock-crowing, Mark 13:35. Concerning the nature and progress of Peter's denial, see the notes on Matthew 26:58, 69-75.



**Verse 28. *The hall of judgment***— εἰς τὸ πραιτωριος, To the praetorium. This was the house where Pilate lodged; hence called in our margin, Pilate's house. The praetorium is so called from being the dwelling-place of the praetor, or chief of the province. It was also the place where he held his court, and tried causes.

St. John has omitted all that passed in the house of Caiaphas—the accusations brought against Christ—the false witnesses—the insults which he received in the house of the high priest—and the assembling of the grand council, or Sanhedrin. These he found amply detailed by the other three evangelists; and for this reason it appears that he omitted them. John's is properly a supplementary Gospel.

***Lest they should be defiled***— The Jews considered even the touch of a Gentile as a legal defilement; and therefore would not venture into the praetorium, for fear of contracting some impurity, which would have obliged them to separate themselves from all religious ordinances till the evening, Leviticus 15:10, 11, 19, 20.

***That they might eat the passover.***— Some maintain that τὸ πάσχα here does not mean the paschal lamb, but the other sacrifices which were offered during the paschal solemnity—for this had been eaten the evening before; and that our Lord was crucified the day after the passover. Others have maintained that the paschal lamb is here meant; that this was the proper day for sacrificing it; that it was on the very hour in which it was offered that Christ expired on the cross; and that therefore our Lord did not eat the Paschal lamb this year, or that he ate it some hours before the common time. Bishop Pearce supposes that it was lawful for the Jews to eat the paschal lamb any time between the evening of Thursday and that of Friday. He conjectures too that this permission was necessary on account of the immense number of lambs which were to be killed for that purpose. When Cestius desired to know the number of the Jews, he asked the priests how he might accomplish his wish? They informed him that this might be known by the number of the lambs slain at the passover, as never less than ten partook of one lamb, though twenty might feast on it. On this mode of computation he found the lambs to be 256,500; εἰκοσι πέντε μυριαδας ηριθμησαν, προς δε εξακισχίλια και πεντακοσια. See Josephus, War, b. vi. c. 9. s. 3.

That Jesus ate a passover this last year of his life is sufficiently evident from Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-18; Luke 22:8-15; and that he ate this passover some hours before the ordinary time, and was himself slain at that hour in which the paschal lamb was ordered by the law to be sacrificed, is highly probable, if not absolutely certain. See the note on Matthew 26:20, and at the conclusion of the chapter, where the subject, and the different opinions on it, are largely considered. {Matthew 26:26}

**Verse 29. *Pilate then went out***— This was an act of condescension; but, as the Romans had confirmed to the Jews the free use of all their rites and ceremonies, the governor could not do less than comply with them in this matter. He went out to them, that they might not be obliged to come into the hall, and thus run the risk of being defiled.

**Verse 30. *If he were not a malefactor***— So they did not wish to make Pilate the judge, but the executor of the sentence which they had already illegally passed.

**Verse 31. *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death***— They might have judged Jesus according to their law, as Pilate bade them do; but they could only excommunicate or scourge him. They might have voted him worthy of death; but they could not put him to death, if any thing of a secular nature were charged against him. The power of life and death was in all probability taken from the Jews when Archelaus, king of Judea, was banished to Vienna, and Judea was made a Roman province; and this happened more than fifty years before the destruction of Jerusalem. But the Romans suffered Herod, mentioned Acts 12:1, etc., to exercise the power of life and death during his reign. See much on this point in Calmet and Pearce. After all, I think it probable that, though the power of life and death was taken away from the Jews, as far as it concerned affairs of state, yet it was continued to them in matters which were wholly of an ecclesiastical nature; and that they only applied thus to Pilate to persuade him that they were proceeding against Christ as an enemy of the state, and not as a transgressor of their own peculiar laws and customs. Hence, though they assert that he should die according to their law, because he made himself the Son of God, John 19:7, yet they lay peculiar stress on his being an enemy to the Roman government; and, when they found Pilate disposed to let him go, they asserted that if he did he was not Caesar's

friend, John 18:12. It was this that intimidated Pilate, and induced him to give him up, that they might crucify him. How they came to lose this power is accounted for in a different manner by Dr. Lightfoot. His observations are very curious, and are subjoined to the end of this chapter. {John 18:40}

**Verse 32. *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled***— Or, thus the word was fulfilled. God permitted the Jews to lose the power of life and death, in the sense before stated, that according to the Roman laws, which punished sedition, etc., with the cross, Christ might be crucified, according to his own prediction: John 12:32, 3:14.

**Verse 33. *Art thou the king of the Jews?***— St. Luke says, expressly, Luke 23:2, that when the Jews brought him to Pilate they began to accuse him as a rebel, who said he was king of the Jews, and forbade the people to pay tribute to Caesar. It was in consequence of this accusation that Pilate asked the question mentioned in the text.

**Verse 34. *Sayest thou this thing of thyself***— That is, Is it because my enemies thus accuse me, or because thou hast any suspicion of me, that thou askest this question?

**Verse 35. Amos *I a Jew?***— That is, I am not a Jew, and cannot judge whether thou art what is called the Christ, the king of the Jews. It is thy own countrymen, and their spiritual rulers, who delivered thee up to me with the above accusation.

***What hast thou done?***— If thou dost not profess thyself king over this people, and an enemy to Caesar, what is it that thou hast done, for which they desire thy condemnation?

**Verse 36. *My kingdom is not of this world***— It is purely spiritual and Divine. If it had been of a secular nature, then my servants would have contended—they would have opposed force with force, as the kingdoms of this world do in their wars; but as my kingdom is not of this world, therefore no resistance has been made. Eusebius relates, Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 20, that “The relatives of our Lord were brought before Domitian, and interrogated whether they were of the family of David; and what sort the kingdom of Christ was, and where it would appear? They answered, that this kingdom was neither of this world, nor of an earthly nature; that

it was altogether heavenly and angelical; and that it would not take place till the end of the world.”

**Verse 37. *Thou sayest***— A common form of expression for, yes, it is so. I was born into the world that I might set up and maintain a spiritual government: but this government is established in and by truth. All that love truth, hear my voice and attend to the spiritual doctrines I preach. It is by truth alone that I influence the minds and govern the manners of my subjects.

**Verse 38. *What is truth***— Among the sages of that time there were many opinions concerning truth; and some had even supposed that it was a thing utterly out of the reach of men. Pilate perhaps might have asked the question in a mocking way; and his not staying to get an answer indicated that he either despaired of getting a satisfactory one, or that he was indifferent about it. This is the case with thousands: they appear desirous of knowing the truth, but have not patience to wait in a proper way to receive an answer to their question.

***I find in him no fault***— Having asked the above question, and being convinced of our Lord’s innocence, he went out to the Jews to testify his convictions and to deliver him, if possible, out of their hands.

**Verse 39. *But ye have a custom***— Nothing relative to the origin or reason of this custom is known. Commentators have swam in an ocean of conjecture on this point. They have lost their labor, and made nothing out: see the notes on Matthew 27:15; Luke 23:17.

**Verse 40. *Barabbas was a robber***— See Matthew 27:16.

The later Syriac has in the margin, *αρχιληστης*, a chief robber, a captain of banditti, and it is probable that this was the case. He was not only a person who lived by plunder, but shed the blood of many of those whom he and his gang robbed, and rose up against the Roman government, as we learn from Luke 23:19. There never existed a more perfidious, cruel, and murderous people than these Jews; and no wonder they preferred a murderer to the Prince of peace. Christ himself had said, If ye were of the world, the world would love its own. Like cleaves to like: hence we need not be surprised to find the vilest things still preferred to Christ, his kingdom, and his salvation.

1. It is not easy to give the character of Pilate. From the manner of his conduct, we scarcely can tell when he is in jest or in earnest. He appears to have been fully convinced of the innocence of Christ; and that the Jews, through envy and malice, desired his destruction. On this ground he should have released him; but he was afraid to offend the Jews. He knew they were an uneasy, factious, and seditious people; and he was afraid to irritate them. *Fiat justitia, ruat caelum!* was no motto of his. For fear of the clamors of this bad people, he permitted all the forms and requisitions of justice to be outraged, and abandoned the most innocent Jesus to their rage and malice. In this case he knew what was truth, but did not follow its dictates; and he as hastily abandoned the author of it as he did the question he had asked concerning it. Pilate, it is true, was disposed to pity—the Jews were full of malice and cruelty. They both, however, joined in the murder of our Lord. The most that we can say for Pilate is, that he was disposed to justice, but was not inclined to hazard his comfort or safety in doing it. He was an easy, pliable man, who had no objection to do a right thing if it should cost him no trouble; but he felt no disposition to make any sacrifice, even in behalf of innocence, righteousness, and truth. In all the business Pilate showed that he was not a good man; and the Jews proved that they were of their father, the devil. See John 19:8.

2. As Dr. Lightfoot has entered into a regular examination of when and how the Jews lost the power of life and death in criminal cases, it may be necessary to lay before the reader a copious abstract of his researches on this subject, founded on John 18:31.

“It cannot be denied that all capital judgment, or sentence upon life, had been taken from the Jews for above forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, as they oftentimes themselves confess. But how came this to pass? It is commonly received that the Romans, at this time the Jews’ lords and masters, had taken from all their courts a power and capacity of judging the capital matters. Let us superadd a few things here. Rabh Cahna saith, When R. Ismael bar Jose lay sick, they sent to him, saying, Pray, sir, tell us two or three things which thou didst once tell us in the name of thy Father. He saith to them, A hundred and fourscore years before the destruction of the temple, the wicked kingdom (the Roman empire) reigned over Israel, fourscore years before the destruction of the temple, they (the fathers of the Sanhedrin) determined about the uncleanness of the heathen

land, and about glass vessels. Forty years before the destruction of the temple, the Sanhedrin removed and sat in the Taberne. What is the meaning of this tradition? Rabbi Isaac bar Abdimi saith, They did not judge judgments of mulcts. The gloss is, Those are the judgments about fining any that offered violence, that entice a maid, and the price of a servant. When, therefore, they did not sit in the room Gazith, they did not judge about these things, and so those judgments about mulcts or fines ceased. Avodoh Zarah. fol. 82. Here we have one part of their judiciary power lost; not taken away from them by the Romans, but falling of itself, as it were, out of the hands of the Sanhedrin. Nor did the Romans indeed take away their power of judging in capital matters; but they, by their own oscitancy, supine and unreasonable lenity, lost it themselves, for so the Gemara goes on: Rabh Hachman bar Isaac saith, Let him not say that they did not judge judgments of mulcts, for they did not judge capital judgments either. And whence comes this? When they saw that so many murders and homicides multiplied upon them that they could not well judge and call them to account, they said, It is better for us that we remove from place to place; for how can we otherwise (sitting here and not punishing them) not contract guilt upon ourselves?

“They thought themselves obliged to punish murderers while they sat in the room Gazith, for the place itself engaged them to it. They are the words of the Gemarists, upon which the gloss. The room Gazith was half of it within, and half of it without, the holy place. The reason of which was, that it was requisite that the council should sit near the Divine Majesty. Hence it is that they say, Whoever constitutes an unfit judge is as if he planted a grove by the altar of the Lord, as it is written, Judges and officers shalt thou make thee; and it follows presently after, Thou shalt not plant thee a grove near the altar of the Lord thy God, Deuteronomy 16:18, 21. They removed therefore from Gazith, and sat in the Taberne; now though the Taberne were upon the mountain of the temple, yet they did not sit so near the Divine Majesty there as they did when they sat in the room Gazith.

“Let us now in order put the whole matter together.

“I. The Sanhedrin were most stupidly and unreasonably remiss in their punishment of capital offenders; going upon this reason especially, that

they counted it so horrible a thing to put an Israelite to death. Forsooth, he is of the seed of Abraham, of the blood and stock of Israel, and you must have a care how you touch such a one!

“R. Eliezer bar Simeon had laid hold on some thieves. R. Joshua bar Korchah sent to him, saying, O thou vinegar, the son of good wine! (i.e. O thou wicked son of a good father!) how long wilt thou deliver the people of God to the slaughter! He answered and said, I root the thorns out of the vineyard. To whom the other: Let the Lord of the vineyard come and root them out himself. *Bava Meziah*, fol. 83, 2. It is worth noting, that the very thieves of Israel are the people of God; and they must not be touched by any man, but referred to the judgment of God himself!

“When R. Ismael bar R. Jose was constituted a magistrate by the king, there happened some such thing to him; for Elias himself rebuked him, saying, How long wilt thou deliver over the people of God to slaughter! *Ibid.* fol. 64, 1. Hence that which we alleged elsewhere: The Sanhedrin that happens to sentence any one to death within the space of seven years, is termed a destroyer. R. Eliezer ben Azariah saith it is so, if they should but condemn one within seventy years. *Maccoth*, fol. 7, 1.

“II. It is obvious to any one how this foolish remissness, and letting loose the reins of judgment, would soon increase the numbers of robbers, murderers, and all kinds of wickedness; and indeed they did so abundantly multiply that the Sanhedrin neither could nor durst, as it ought, call the criminals to account. The law slept, while wickedness was in the height of its revels; and punitive justice was so out of countenance that as to uncertain murders they made no search, and against certain ones they framed no judgement. Since the time that homicides multiplied, the beheading the heifer ceased. *Sotoh*, fol. 47, 1. And in the place before quoted in *Avodah*: When they saw the numbers of murderers so greatly increase that they could not sit in judgment upon them, they said, Let us remove, etc., fol. 8, 2. So in the case of adultery, which we also observed in our notes on *John* 8:3-11. Since the time that adultery so openly advanced, under the second temple, they left off trying the adulteress by the bitter water, etc. *Mainaon*. in *Sotoh*, cap. 3.

“So that, we see, the liberty of judging in capital matters was no more taken from the Jews by the Romans than the beheading of the heifer, or the

trial of the suspected wife by the bitter waters, was taken away by them, which no one will affirm. It is a tradition of R. Chaia, from the day wherein the temple was destroyed, though the Sanhedrin ceased, yet the four kinds of death (which were wont to be inflicted by the Sanhedrin) did not cease. For he that had deserved to be stoned to death, either fell off from some house, or some wild beast tore and devoured him. He that had deserved burning, either fell into some fire, or some serpent bit him. He that had deserved to be slain (i.e. with the sword) was either delivered into the hands of some heathen king, or was murdered by robbers. He that had deserved strangling, was either drowned in some river, or choked by a squinancy.

“This must be observed from the evangelists, that when they had Christ in examination in the palace of the high priest all night, in the morning the whole Sanhedrin met that they might pass sentence of death upon him. Where then was this that they met? Questionless in the room Gazith-at least if they adhered to their own rules and constitutions: Thither they betook themselves sometimes upon urgent necessity. The gloss before quoted excepts only the case of murder, with which, amongst all their false accusations, they never charged Christ.

“But, however, suppose it were granted that the great council met either in the Taberne, or some other place, (which yet agreed by no means with their own tradition,) did they deal truly, and as the matter really and indeed was, with Pilate, when they tell him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death? He had said to them, Take ye him and judge him according to your laws. We have indeed judged and condemned him, but we cannot put any one to death. Was this that they said in fact true? How came they then to stone the proto-martyr Stephen? How came they to stone Ben Sarda at Lydda? Hieros. Sanhed. fol. 25, 4. How came they to burn the priest’s daughter alive that was taken in adultery? Bab. Sanhed. fol. 52, 1, and 51, 1. It is probable that they had not put any one to death as yet, since the time that they had removed out of Gazith, and so might the easier persuade Pilate in that case. But their great design was to throw off the odium of Christ’s death from themselves; at least among the vulgar crowd; fearing them, if the council should have decreed his execution. They seek this evasion, therefore, which did not altogether want some color and pretext of truth; and it succeeded according to what they desired. Divine



Providence so ordering it as the evangelist intimates, John 18:32, That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake signifying what death he should die: that is, be crucified according to the custom of the Romans. While I am upon this thought, I cannot but reflect upon that passage, than which nothing is more worthy observation in the whole description of the Roman beast in the Revelation, Revelation 13:4. The dragon which gave power to the beast. We cannot say this of the Assyrian, Babylonish, or any other monarchy; for the Holy Scriptures do not say it. But reason dictates, and the event itself tells us, that there was something acted by the Roman empire in behalf of the dragon, which was not compatible with any other, that is, the putting of the Son of God to death. Which thing we must remember as often as we recite that article of our creed, 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate,' that is, was put to death by the Roman empire,"

## CHAPTER 19.

*Jesus is scourged, crowned with thorns, and mocked by the soldiers, 1-3. He is brought forth by Pilate, wearing the purple robe; and the Jews clamor for his death, 4-8. Conversation between our Lord and Pilate, 9-11. Pilate expostulates with the Jews on their barbarous demands; but they become more inveterate, and he delivers Christ into their hands, 12-16. He, bearing his cross, is led to Golgotha, and crucified, 17-22. The soldiers cast lots for his raiment, 23, 24. Jesus commends his mother to the care of John, 25-27. Jesus thirsts, receives vinegar, and dies, 28-30. The Jews request that the legs of those who were crucified might be broken; the soldiers break those of the two thieves, and pierce the side of Christ; the Scriptures fulfilled in these acts, 31-37. Joseph of Arimathea begs the body of Christ; and Nicodemus brings spices to embalm it, 38-40. He is laid in a new sepulchre, 41, 42.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 19.

**Verse 1.** *Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him.*— That is, caused him to be scourged: for we cannot with Bede suppose that he scourged him with his own hand.

As our Lord was scourged by order of Pilate, it is probable he was scourged in the Roman manner, which was much more severe than that of the Jews. The latter never gave more than thirty-nine blows; for the law had absolutely forbidden a man to be abused, or his flesh cut in this chastisement, Deuteronomy 25:3. The common method of whipping or flogging in some places, especially that of a military kind, is a disgrace to the nation where it is done, to the laws, and to humanity. See Matthew 27:26, and the note there. Though it was customary to scourge the person who was to be crucified, yet it appears that Pilate had another end in view by scourging our Lord. He hoped that this would have satisfied the Jews, and that he might then have dismissed Jesus. This appears from Luke 23:16.

**Verse 2.** *Platted a crown of thorns*— See on Matthew 27:29.

**Verse 5. *And Pilate saith***— The word Pilate, which we supply in our version, is added by one MS., the later Syriac, later Arabic, and the Coptic.

***Behold the man!***— The man who, according to you, affects the government, and threatens to take away the empire from the Romans. Behold the man whom ye have brought unto me as an enemy to Caesar, and as a sower of the seeds of sedition in the land! In him I find no guilt; and from him ye have no occasion to fear any evil.

**Verse 6. *Crucify HIM***— *αυτον*, which is necessary to the text, and which is wanting in the common editions, and is supplied by our version in Italics, is added here on the authority of almost every MS. and version of importance. As it is omitted in the common editions, it affords another proof, that they were not taken from the best MSS.

**Verse 7. *We have a law***— In Leviticus 24:14-16, we find that blasphemers of God were to be put to death; and the chief priests having charged Jesus with blasphemy, they therefore voted that he deserved to die. See Matthew 26:65, 66. They might refer also to the law against false prophets, Deuteronomy 18:20.

***The Son of God.***— It is certain that the Jews understood this in a very peculiar sense. When Christ called himself the Son of God, they understood it to imply positive equality to the Supreme Being: and, if they were wrong, our Lord never attempted to correct them.

**Verse 8. *He was the more afraid***— While Jesus was accused only as a disturber of the peace of the nation, which accusation Pilate knew to be false, he knew he could deliver him, because the judgment in that case belonged to himself; but when the Jews brought a charge against him of the most capital nature, from their own laws, he then saw that he had every thing to fear, if he did not deliver Jesus to their will. The Sanhedrin must not be offended—the populace must not be irritated: from the former a complaint might be sent against him to Caesar; the latter might revolt, or proceed to some acts of violence, the end of which could not be foreseen. Pilate was certainly to be pitied: he saw what was right, and he wished to do it; but he had not sufficient firmness of mind. He did not attend to that important maxim, *Fiat justitia: ruat caelum*. Let justice be done, though the heavens should be dissolved. He had a vile people to govern, and it was

not an easy matter to keep them quiet. Some suppose that Pilate's fear arose from hearing that Jesus had said he was the Son of God; because Pilate, who was a polytheist, believed that it was possible for the offspring of the gods to visit mortals; and he was afraid to condemn Jesus, for fear of offending some of the supreme deities. Perhaps the question in the succeeding verse refers to this.

**Verse 9. *Whence art thou?***— This certainly does not mean, From what country art thou? for Pilate knew this well enough; but it appears he made this inquiry to know who were the parents of Christ; what were his pretensions, and whether he really were a demigod, such as the heathens believed in. To this question we find our Lord gave no answer. He had already told him that his kingdom was not of this world; and that he came to erect a spiritual kingdom, not a temporal one: John 18:36, 37. This answer he deemed sufficient; and he did not choose to satisfy a criminal curiosity, nor to enter then into any debate concerning the absurdity of the heathen worship.

**Verse 11. *Hath the greater sin.***— It is a sin in thee to condemn me, while thou art convinced in thy conscience that I am innocent: but the Jews who delivered me to thee, and Judas who delivered me to the Jews, have the greater crime to answer for. Thy ignorance in some measure excuses thee; but the rage and malice of the Jews put them at present out of the reach of mercy.

**Verse 12. *Pilate sought to release him.***— Pilate made five several attempts to release our Lord; as we may learn from Luke 23:4, 15, 20, 22; John 19:4, 12, 13.

***Thou art not Caesar's friend.***— Thou dost not act like a person who has the interest of the emperor at heart. Ambassadors, prefects, counsellors, etc., were generally termed the friends of the emperor. This insinuation determined Pilate to make no longer resistance: he was afraid of being accused, and he knew Tiberius was one of the most jealous and distrustful princes in the world. During his reign, accusations of conspiracies were much in fashion; they were founded on the silliest pretenses, and punished with excessive rigour. See Calmet, Tacit. An. l. i. c. 72, 73, 74. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 58.

**Verse 13. *The Pavement***— λιθοστρωτον, literally, a stone pavement: probably it was that place in the open court where the chair of justice was set, for the prefects of provinces always held their courts of justice in the open air, and which was paved with stones of various colors, like that of Ahasuerus, Esther 1:6, of red, blue, white, and black marble; what we still term Mosaic work, or something in imitation of it; such as the Roman pavements frequently dug up in this and other countries, where the Romans have had military stations.

***Gabbatha***.— That is, an elevated place; from גבה gabah, high, raised up; and it is very likely that the judgment seat was considerably elevated in the court, and that the governor went up to it by steps; and perhaps these very steps were what was called the Pavement. John does not say that Lithostroton, or the Pavement, is the meaning of the word Gabbatha; but that the place was called so in the Hebrew. The place was probably called Lithostroton, or the Pavement: the seat of judgment, Gabbatha, the raised or elevated place.

In several MSS. and versions, the scribes not understanding the Hebrew word, wrote it variously, Gabbatha, Gabatha, Kapphatha, Kappata, Gennetha, Gennaesa, and Gennesar. Lightfoot conjectures that the pavement here means the room Gazith in the temple, in which the grand council, called the Sanhedrin, held their meetings.

**Verse 14. *It was the preparation of the Passover***— That is, the time in which they were just preparing to kill the paschal lamb. Critics differ widely concerning the time of our Lord's crucifixion; and this verse is variously understood. Some think it signifies merely the preparation of the Sabbath; and that it is called the preparation of the passover, because the preparation of the Sabbath happened that year on the eve of the Passover. Others think that the preparation of the Sabbath is distinctly spoken of in John 19:31, and was different from what is here mentioned. Contending nations may be more easily reconciled than contending critics.

***The sixth hour***— Mark says, Mark 15:25, that it was the third hour. τριτη, the third, is the reading of DL, four others, the Chron. Alex., Seuerus Antiochen., Ammonius, with others mentioned by Theophylact. Nonnus, who wrote in the fifth century, reads τριτη, the third. As in ancient times all the numbers were written in the manuscripts not at large

but in numeral letters, it was easy for  $\gamma$  three, to be mistaken for  $\varsigma$  six. The Codex Bezae has generally numeral letters instead of words. Bengel observes that he has found the letter  $\gamma$  gamma, THREE, exceedingly like the  $\varsigma$  episemon, SIX, in some MSS. {Episemon = greek 'st' combined, similar appearance to final form sigma with a nearly flat top. Similar appearance to upper case gamma.} The major part of the best critics think that  $\tau\rho\iota\tau\eta$ , the third, is the genuine reading. See the note on Mark 15:25.

***Behold your king!***— This was probably intended as an irony; and, by thus turning their pretended serious apprehensions into ridicule, he hoped still to release him.

**Verse 15. *Away with him***—  $\alpha\rho\omicron\nu$ : probably this means, kill him. In Isaiah 57:1, it is said,  $\kappa\alpha\iota \alpha\upsilon\delta\rho\epsilon\varsigma, \delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\iota \alpha\iota\rho\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ , and just men are taken away; that is, according to some, by a violent death.

**Verse 16. *Then delivered he him***— This was not till after he had washed his hands, Matthew 27:24, to show, by that symbolical action, that he was innocent of the death of Christ. John omits this circumstance, together with the insults which Christ received from the soldiers. See Matthew 27:26, etc.; Mark 15:16, etc.

**Verse 17. *Bearing his cross***— He bore it all alone first; when he could no longer carry the whole through weakness, occasioned by the ill usage he had received, Simon, a Cyrenian, helped him to carry it: see the note on Matthew 27:32.

***Golgotha***— See on Matthew 27:33.

**Verse 18. *Two other***— Matthew and Mark in the parallel places calls them robbers or murderers; they probably belonged to the gang of Barabbas. See about the figure of the cross, and the nature of crucifixion, on Matthew 27:35.

**Verse 19. *Pilate wrote a title***— See on Matthew 27:37.

**Verse 20. *Hebrew, -Greek, -Latin***.— See on Luke 23:38.

On Matthew 27:37, I have given this title in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, as mentioned by this evangelist. The reader, however, will not be displeased to find the same title repeated here in a character which was written in the

fourth century, and is probably nearly resembling that used in the earliest ages of Christianity. The Greek and Latin character, which is inserted here, is an exact fac-simile of that in the Codex Bezae, cut and cast at the expense of the University of Cambridge, for Dr. Kipling's edition of that most venerable MS. which contains the Greek text of the four evangelists and Acts; and the Latin text of the same, as it existed before the time of St. Jerome. Having examined the MS. myself, I can say that these types are a very faithful representation of the original.

In Hebrew, ἑβραϊστί.

יסוע נצריא מלכא דיהודיא

In Greek, ἑλληνιστί.

ιησους ο ναζωρεος ο βασιλευς των ιουδαιων

In Latin, ῥωμαϊστί.

iehsus nazarenus rex iudaeorum

**Verse 22. *What I have written, I have written.***— That is, I will not alter what I have written. The Roman laws forbade the sentence to be altered when once pronounced; and as this inscription was considered as the sentence pronounced against our Lord, therefore, it could not be changed: but this form of speech is common in the Jewish writings, and means simply, what is done shall continue. Pilate seems to speak prophetically. This is the king of the Jews: they shall have no other Messiah for ever.

**Verse 23. *To every soldier a part***— So it appears there were four soldiers employed in nailing him to and rearing up the cross.

***The coat was without seam***— Several have seriously doubted whether this can be literally understood, as they imagine that nothing with sleeves, etc. can be woven without a seam. But Baun, de Vest. Sacer. Heb. l. 1, c. 16, has proved, not only that such things were done by the ancients, and are still done in the east, but himself got a loom made, on which these kinds of tunics, vents, sleeves, and all, were woven in one piece. See much on this subject in Calmet. The clothes of a Hindoo are always without a seam; and the Brahmins would not wear clothes that were otherwise made. Besides, the Hindoos have no regular tailors.

Our Lord was now in the grand office of high priest, and was about to offer the expiatory victim for the sin of the world. And it is worthy of remark that the very dress he was in was similar to that of the Jewish high priest. The following is the description given of his dress by Josephus, Ant. b. iii. c. 7, s. 4: “Now this coat (**χιτων**) was not composed of two pieces, nor was it sewed together upon the shoulders and sides, but it was one long vestment, so woven as to have an opening for the neck; not an oblique one, but parted all along the back and breast; it was also parted where the hands were to come out.” A little before, the same author says, that “the high priest had a long robe of a blue color, which hung down to the feet, and was put over all the rest.” It is likely that this was the same with that upper garment which the soldiers divided among them, it being probably of a costly stuff. I may just add here, that I knew a woman who knit all kinds of clothes, even to the sleeves and button holes, without a seam; and have seen some of the garments which she made; that the thing is possible I have the fullest proof. For an explanation of **χιτων** and **ιματιον** which we translate cloak, and coat, see the note on Luke 6:29.

**Verse 24.** *That the scripture might be fulfilled*— These words are found in the common printed text, in Matthew 27:35; but they are omitted by ABDEFGHKLMSU, Mt. BHV, 150 others; the principal versions, Chrysostom, Titus Bost., Euthymius, Theophylact, Origen, Hilary, Augustin, Juven. See Griesbach’s second edition. But in the text of John they are not omitted by one MS., version, or ancient commentator.

The words are taken from Psalm 22:18, where it appears they were spoken prophetically of this treatment which Jesus received, upwards of a thousand years before it took place!

But it should be remarked that this form of speech, which frequently occurs, often means no more than that the thing so fell out that such a portion of Scripture may be exactly applied to it.

**Verse 25.** *Mary the wife of Cleopas*— She is said, in Matthew 27:56, (see the note there,) and Mark 15:40, to have been the mother of James the Less, and of Joses; and this James her son is said, in Matthew 10:3, to have been the son of Alpheus; hence it seems that Alpheus and Cleopas were the same person. To which may be added, that Hegesippus is quoted by Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. l. iii. c. 11, as saying that Cleopas was the brother



of Joseph, the husband of the virgin. Theophylact says that Cleopas, (brother of Joseph, the husband of the virgin,) having died childless, his brother Joseph married his widow, by whom he had four sons, called by the evangelists the brothers of our Lord, and two daughters, the one named Salome, the other Mary, the daughter of Cleopas, because she was his daughter according to law, though she was the daughter of Joseph according to nature. There are several conjectures equally well founded with this last to be met with in the ancient commentators; but, in many cases, it is very difficult to distinguish the different Marys mentioned by the evangelists.

**Verse 26. *The disciple-whom he loved***— John, the writer of this Gospel.

***Woman, behold thy son!***— This is a remarkable expression, and has been much misunderstood. It conveys no idea of disrespect, nor of unconcern, as has been commonly supposed. In the way of compellation, man! and woman! were titles of as much respect among the Hebrews as sir! and madam! are among us. But why does not Jesus call her mother? Probably because he wished to spare her feelings; he would not mention a name, the very sound of which must have wrung her heart with additional sorrow. On this account he says, Behold thy son! this was the language of pure natural affection: “Consider this crucified man no longer at present as any relative of thine; but take that disciple whom my power shall preserve from evil for thy son; and, while he considers thee as his mother, account him for thy child.” It is probable that it was because the keeping of the blessed virgin was entrusted to him that he was the only disciple of our Lord who died a natural death, God having preserved him for the sake of the person whom he gave him in charge. Many children are not only preserved alive, but abundantly prospered in temporal things, for the sake of the desolate parents whom God hast cast upon their care. It is very likely that Joseph was dead previously to this; and that this was the reason why the desolate virgin is committed to the care of the beloved disciple.

**Verse 28. *I thirst.***— The scripture that referred to his drinking the vinegar is Psalm 69:21. The fatigue which he had undergone, the grief he had felt, the heat of the day, and the loss of blood, were the natural causes of this thirst. This he would have borne without complaint; but he wished to give

them the fullest proof of his being the Messiah, by distinctly marking how every thing relative to the Messiah, which had been written in the prophets, had its complete fulfillment in him.

**Verse 29. *A vessel full of vinegar***— This was probably that tart small wine which we are assured was the common drink of the Roman soldiers. Our word vinegar comes from the French *vin aigre*, sour or tart wine; and, although it is probable that it was brought at this time for the use of the four Roman soldiers who were employed in the crucifixion of our Lord, yet it is as probable that it might have been furnished for the use of the persons crucified; who, in that lingering kind of death, must necessarily be grievously tormented with thirst. This vinegar must not be confounded with the vinegar and gall mentioned Matthew 27:34, and Mark 15:23. That, being a stupifying potion, intended to alleviate his pain, he refused to drink; but of this he took a little, and then expired, John 19:30.

***And put it upon hyssop***— Or, according to others, putting hyssop about it. A great variety of conjectures have been produced to solve the difficulty in this text, which is occasioned by supposing that the sponge was put on a stalk of hyssop, and that this is the reed mentioned by Matthew and Mark. It is possible that the hyssop might grow to such a size in Judea as that a stalk of it might answer the end of a reed or cane in the case mentioned here; but still it appears to me more natural to suppose that the reed was a distinct thing and that the hyssop was used only to bind the sponge fast to the reed; unless we may suppose it was added for some mystical purpose, as we find it frequently used in the Old Testament in rites of purification. The various conjectures on this point may be seen in Bowyer's *Conject.* and in Calmet.

**Verse 30. *It is finished***— As if he had said: "I have executed the great designs of the Almighty-I have satisfied the demands of his justice-I have accomplished all that was written in the prophets, and suffered the utmost malice of my enemies; and now the way to the holy of holies is made manifest through my blood." An awful, yet a glorious finish. Through this tragical death God is reconciled to man, and the kingdom of heaven opened to every believing soul.

"Shout heaven and earth, this SUM of good to MAN!"

See the note on Matthew 27:50.

The prodigies which happened at our Lord's death, and which are mentioned by the other three evangelists, are omitted by John, because he found the others had sufficiently stated them, and it appears he had nothing new to add.

**Verse 31. *It was the preparation***— Every Sabbath had a preparation which began at the ninth hour (that is, three o'clock) the preceding evening. Josephus, Ant. b. xvi. c. 6, s. 2, recites an edict of the Emperor Augustus in favor of the Jews, which orders, "that no one shall be obliged to give bail or surety on the Sabbath day, nor on the preparation before it, after the ninth hour." The time fixed here was undoubtedly in conformity to the Jewish custom, as they began their preparation at three o'clock on the Friday evening.

***That the bodies should not remain***— For the law, Deuteronomy 21:22, 23, ordered that the bodies of criminals should not hang all night; and they did not wish to have the Sabbath profaned by either taking them down on that day, or letting them hang to disturb the joy of that holy time. Probably their consciences began to sting them for what they had done, and they wished to remove the victim of their malice out of their sight.

***For that Sabbath day was a high day***— 1. Because it was the Sabbath. 2. Because it was the day on which all the people presented themselves in the temple according to the command, Exodus 23:17. 3. Because that was the day on which the sheaf of the first fruits was offered, according to the command, Leviticus 23:10, 11. So that upon this day there happened to be three solemnities in one.—Lightfoot. It might be properly called a high day, because the passover fell on that Sabbath.

***Their legs might be broken***— Lactantius says. 1. iv. c. 26, that it was a common custom to break the legs or other bones of criminals upon the cross; and this appears to have been a kind of coup de grace, the sooner to put them out of pain.

**Verse 34. *With a spear pierced his side***— The soldier who pierced our Lord's side has been called by the Roman Catholic writers Longinus, which seems to be a corruption of *λογχη*, lonche, a spear or dart, the word in the text. They moreover tell us that this man was converted—that it was

he who said, Truly this was the Son of God—that he traveled into Cappadocia, and there preached the Gospel of Christ, and received the crown of martyrdom. But this deserves the same credit as the other legends of the Popish Church.

Whether it was the right or the left side of Christ that was pierced has been a matter of serious discussion among divines and physicians; and on this subject they are not yet agreed. That it is of no importance we are sure, because the Holy Ghost has not revealed it. Luke Cranache, a famous painter, whose piece of the crucifixion is at Augsburg, has put no wound on either side: when he was asked the reason of this—I will do it, said he, when I am informed WHICH side was pierced.

*Blood and water.*— It may be naturally supposed that the spear went through the pericardium and pierced the heart; that the water proceeded from the former, and the blood from the latter. Ambrose, Augustin, and Chrysostom, make the blood an emblem of the eucharist, and the water an emblem of baptism. Others represent them as the emblems of the old and new covenants. Protestants have thought them the emblems of justification, which is through the blood of the Lamb, and sanctification, which is through the washing of regeneration; and it is in reference to the first notion that they mingle the wine with water in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The piercing appears to have taken place because his legs were not broken; and, as the law in this case stated that the criminals were to continue on the cross till they died, the side of our Lord was pierced to secure the accomplishment of the law; and the issuing of the blood and water appears to be only a natural effect of the above cause, and probably nothing mystical or spiritual was intended by it. However, it affords the fullest proof that Jesus died for our sins. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that there is a reference here to the rock in the wilderness which Moses smote twice, and which, according to the Jews, Shemoth Rabba, fol. 122, “poured out blood at the first stroke, and water at the second.” Now St. Paul says, 1 Corinthians 10:4, That rock was Christ; and here the evangelist says, the soldier pierced his side, and there came out blood and water. St. John therefore, in what he asserts in the 35th and 36th verses, {John 19:35, 36} wishes to call the attention of the Jews to this point, in order to show them that this Jesus was the true Messiah, who was typified by the rock in the wilderness. He knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

**Verse 35. *He that saw it***— Most probably John himself, who must have been pretty near the cross to have been able to distinguish between the blood and the water, as they issued from the side of our blessed Lord.

***And he knoweth***— This appears to be an appeal to the Lord Jesus, for the truth of the testimony which he had now delivered. But why such a solemn appeal, unless there was something miraculous in this matter? It might appear to him necessary: 1. Because the other evangelists had not noticed it. 2. Because it contained the most decisive proof of the death of Christ: as a wound such as this was could not have been inflicted, (though other causes had been wanting,) without occasioning the death of the person; and on his dying for men depended the salvation of the world. And, 3. Because two important prophecies were fulfilled by this very circumstance, both of which designated more particularly the person of the Messiah. A bone of him shall not be broken, Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20. They shall look upon him whom they pierced, Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22:16.

**Verse 38. *Joseph of Arimathea***— See on Matthew 27:57-60; and particularly Mark 15:42, 43.

**Verse 39. *Nicodemus***— See on John 3:1, etc.

***Myrrh and aloes***— Which drugs were used to preserve bodies from putrefaction. Calmet says that the aloes mentioned here is a liquor which runs from an aromatic tree, and is widely different from that called aloes among us.

Some have objected that a hundred pounds' weight of myrrh and aloes was enough to embalm two hundred dead bodies; and instead of **εκατον**, a hundred, some critics have proposed to read **εκατερον** - a mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about a pound EACH. See Bowyer's Conjectures. But it may be observed that great quantities of spices were used for embalming dead bodies, when they intended to show peculiar marks of respect to the deceased. A great quantity was used at the funeral of Aristobulus; and it is said that five hundred servants bearing aromatics attended the funeral of Herod: see Josephus, Ant. b. xv. c. 3, s. 4; and b. xvii. c. 8, s. 3: and fourscore pounds of spices were used at the funeral of R. Gamaliel the elder. See Wetstein in loc.

**Verse 40. *Wound it in linen***— See on John 11:34.

**Verse 41. *There was a garden***— It was an ancient custom for particular families to have burying places in their gardens. See 2 Kings 21:18, 26.

***New sepulchre***— See on Matthew 27:60.

**Verse 42. *Because of the Jews' preparation***— From this it may be conjectured that they had designed to have put him in a more magnificent tomb; or, that they intended to make one expressly for himself after the passover: or, that they had designed to have put him somewhere else, but could not do it for want of time; and that they put him here because the tomb was nigh. It appears plainly, from embalming, etc., that none of these persons had any hope of the resurrection of Christ. They considered him as a great and eminent prophet, and treated him as such.

1. IN the burial of our Lord, a remarkable prophecy was fulfilled: His death was appointed with the wicked; and with a rich man was his tomb. See Lowth on Isaiah 53:9. Every thing attending his mock trial, his passion, his death, his burial, etc., afforded the fullest proof of his innocence. In still continuing to reject him, the Jews seem to have exceeded the ordinary bounds of incredulity and callousness of heart. One might imagine that a candid attention to the Gospel facts, collated with those passages in the law and in the prophets which they acknowledge to speak of the Messiah, would be sufficient to furnish them with the utmost evidence and fullest conviction that he is the Christ, and that they are to expect none other. But where people once make a covenant with unbelief, argument, reason, demonstration, and miracles themselves, fail to convince them. As their conviction, through this obstinacy, is rendered impossible, it belongs to God's justice to confound them. At present they have scarcely any correct knowledge of the true God; and, while they continue to reject the genuine faith, they are capable of crediting the most degrading absurdities.

2. The holy sepulchre, or what has long passed for the burial place of our Lord, is now no more! On the following information the reader may depend: "On the night of October 11, 1808, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was discovered to be on fire; and between five and six in the morning the burning cupola, with all the melting and boiling lead upon it, fell in. The excessive heat which proceeded from this immense mass of

liquid fire, caused not only the marble columns, which supported the gallery, to burst; but likewise the marble floor of the Church, together with the pilasters and images in bas relief that decorate the chapel, containing the holy sepulchre, situated in the centre of the church. Shortly after, the massive columns which supported the gallery, fell down, together with the whole of the walls.” Thus has perished the famous church raised by the Empress Helena fourteen hundred years ago, over the place where the body of our blessed Lord was supposed to have been deposited, while he lay under the power of death. And thus has perished an engine of superstition, fraud, and imposture. To the most sinful purposes has this holy sepulchre been abused. The Greeks and Armenians have pretended that, on every Easter-eve, fire descends from heaven, and kindles all the lamps and candles in the place; and immense crowds of pilgrims frequent this place, on these occasions, in order to witness this ceremony, to light a taper at this sacred flame, and with these candles to singe and daub pieces of linen, which are afterwards to serve for winding sheets; for, says Mr. Maundrell, who was present, April 3rd, 1697, and witnessed the whole of this absurd and abominable ceremony, “it is the opinion of these poor people that, if they can but have the happiness to be buried in a shroud smutted with this celestial fire, it will certainly secure them from the flames of hell.”

See the whole of his circumstantial account of this imposture, and the ridiculous and abominable ceremonies with which it is accompanied, in his *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, edit. 5th, pp. 94-97; and let the reader thank God that he is not degraded with a superstition that renders the grace of the Gospel of none effect.

## CHAPTER 20.

*Mary Magdalene, coming early to the sepulchre, finds it empty, and runs and tells Peter, 1, 2. Peter and John run to the tomb, and find all as Mary had reported, 3-10. Mary sees a vision of angels in the tomb, 11-13. Jesus himself appears to her, and sends her with a message to the disciples, 14-18. He appears to the disciples, gives the fullest proof of the reality of his resurrection, and communicates to them a measure of the Holy Spirit, 19-23. The determined incredulity of Thomas, 24, 25. Eight days after, Jesus appears again to the disciples, Thomas being present, to whom he gives the proofs he had desired, 26, 27. Thomas is convinced, and makes a noble confession, 28. Our Lord's reflections on his case, 29. Various signs done by Christ, not circumstantially related, 30. Why others are recorded, 31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20.

All that John relates concerning the resurrection of our Lord he has collected partly from the account given by Mary Magdalene, and partly from his own observations. From Mary he derived the information given, John 20:1, 2, and from John 20:11-18. From his own actual knowledge, what he relates, John 3:3-10, 19-29, and the whole of John 21:1-25. It is supposed that he details the account given by Mary, without altering any circumstance, and without either addition or retrenchment. See Rosenmuller.

**Verse 1.** *The first day of the week*— On what we call Sunday morning, the morning after the Jewish Sabbath. As Christ had been buried in haste, these holy women had bought aromatics, Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1, to embalm him afresh, and in a more complete manner than it could have been done by Joseph and Nicodemus. John only mentions Mary of Magdala, because he appears to wish to give a more detailed history of her conduct than of any of the rest; but the other evangelists speak of three persons who went together to the tomb, viz. Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome: Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1.



**Verse 2. *Then she runneth***— This was after the women had seen the angels, who said he was risen from the dead, Luke 24:4. She told, not only Peter and John, but the other apostles also, Matthew 28:8; but only the two disciples above mentioned went to the tomb to see whether what she had said was true.

***They have taken away the Lord***— She mentions nothing of what the angels had said, in her hurry and confusion; she speaks things only by halves; and probably the vision of angels might have appeared to her only as an illusion of her own fancy, and not to be any farther regarded.

**Verse 4. *Outrun Peter***— Not because he had a greater desire to see into the truth of these things; but because he was younger, and lighter of foot.

**Verse 5. *Went he not in***.— Why? Because he was fully satisfied that the body was not there. But why did he not seize upon the linen clothes, and keep them as a most precious relic? Because he had too much religion and too much sense; and the time of superstition and nonsense was not yet arrived, in which bits of rotten wood, rags of rotten cloth, decayed bones (to whom originally belonging no one knows) and bramble bushes, should become objects of religious adoration.

**Verse 6. *Seeth the linen clothes lie***— **θεωπει**: from **θεομαι**, to behold, and **οραω**, to see—to look steadily at any thing, so as to discover what it is, and to be satisfied with viewing it.

**Verse 7. *Wrapped together in a place by itself***.— The providence of God ordered these very little matters, so that they became the fullest proofs against the lie of the chief priests, that the body had been stolen away by the disciples. If the body had been stolen away, those who took it would not have stopped to strip the clothes from it, and to wrap them up, and lay them by in separate places.

**Verse 8. *That other disciple***— John.

***Saw***— That the body was not there.

***And believed***.— That it had been taken away, as Mary had said; but he did not believe that he was risen from the dead. See what follows.

**Verse 9. *They knew not the scripture***— Viz. Psalm 16:9, 10: Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell-**כִּי לֹא תַעֲזֹב נַפְשִׁי לְשַׁאוֹל** ki lo taazob naphshi l'sheol-For thou wilt not abandon my life to the grave, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. It was certainly a reproach to the disciples that they had not understood this prophecy, when our Lord had given them often the most direct information concerning it. Christ had referred to the history of Jonah, Matthew 12:40, which was at once the type and the proof of his own resurrection. However, this ingenuous confession of John, in a matter so dishonorable to himself, is a full proof of his sincerity, and of the truth of his narration.

**Verse 10. *Unto their own home***.— Either to their own houses, if they still had any; or to those of their friends, or to those where they had a hired lodging, and where they met together for religious purposes. See John 20:19.

**Verse 11. *But Mary stood without***— She remained some time after Peter and John had returned to their own homes.

**Verse 12. *Seeth two angels***— See on John 20:6. She knew these to be angels by their white and glistening robes. Matthew and Mark mention but one angel-probably that one only that spoke, John 20:13.

***One at the head, and the other at the feet***— So were the cherubim placed at each end of the mercy-seat: Exodus 25:18, 19. Lightfoot.

**Verse 13. *They have taken away my Lord***— It was conjectured, on John 19:42, that the body of our Lord was only put here for the time being, that, after the Sabbath, they might carry it to a more proper place. Mary seems to refer to this: They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. This removal she probably attributed to some of our Lord's disciples, or to some of his friends.

**Verse 14. *She turned herself back***— Or, **εστραφη εις τα οπισω**, she was turned back, i.e. to go again with the other women to Jerusalem, who had already departed; but she had not as yet gone so far as to be out of the garden.

***Knew not that it was Jesus***— John has here omitted what the angels said to the women, about Christ's being risen; probably because it was so

particularly related by the other evangelists: Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:6, 7; Luke 24:5-7. Mary was so absorbed in grief that she paid but little attention to the person of our Lord, and therefore did not at first discern it to be him; nor could she imagine such an appearance possible, as she had no conception of his resurrection from the dead. She was therefore every way unprepared to recognize the person of our Lord.

**Verse 15. *Supposing him to be the gardener***— κηπουρος, the inspector or overseer of the garden, from κηπος, a garden, and ουρος, an inspector—the person who had the charge of the workmen, and the care of the produce of the garden; and who rendered account to the owner.

***And I will take him away***— How true is the proverb, Love feels no load! Jesus was in the prime of life when he was crucified, and had a hundred pounds weight of spices added to his body; and yet Mary thinks of nothing less than carrying him away with her, if she can but find where he is laid!

**Verse 16. *Mary***.— This word was no doubt spoken with uncommon emphasis; and the usual sound of Christ's voice accompanied it, so as immediately to prove that it must be Jesus. What transports of joy must have filled this woman's heart! Let it be remarked that Mary Magdalene sought Jesus more fervently, and continued more affectionately attached to him than any of the rest: therefore to her first, Jesus is pleased to show himself, and she is made the first herald of the Gospel of a risen Savior.

After Mary's exclamation of Rabboni, and its interpretation by the evangelist, one MS., the later Syriac, Syriac Hieros., and three copies of the Itala, add και προσεδραμεν αψασθαι αυτου, And she ran to embrace, or cling to him. Then our Lord's words come in with the reason for them.

**Verse 17. *Touch me not***— μη μου απτου, Cling not to me. ἄπτομαι has this sense in Job 31:7, where the Septuagint use it for the Hebrew דָּבַק dabak, which signifies to cleave, cling, stick, or be glued to. From Matthew 28:9, it appears that some of the women held him by the feet and worshipped him. This probably Mary did; and our Lord seems to have spoken to her to this effect: "Spend no longer time with me now: I am not going immediately to heaven—you will have several opportunities of seeing

me again: but go and tell my disciples, that I am, by and by, to ascend to my Father and God, who is your Father and God also. Therefore, let them take courage.”

**Verse 18. *Told the disciples—that he had spoken these things***— St. Mark says, Mark 16:11, that the afflicted apostles could not believe what she had said. They seem to have considered it as an effect of her troubled imagination.

**Verse 19. *The doors were shut-for fear of the Jews***— We do not find that the Jews designed to molest the disciples: that word of authority which Christ spoke, John 18:8, Let these go away-had prevented the Jews from offering them any injury; but, as they had proceeded so far as to put Christ to death, the faith of the disciples not being very strong, they were led to think that they should be the next victims if found. Some think, therefore, that they had the doors not only shut, but barricadoed: nevertheless Jesus came in, the doors being shut, i.e. while they continued shut. But how? By his almighty power: and farther we know not. Yet it is quite possible that no miraculous influence is here intended. The doors might be shut for fear of the Jews; and Jesus might open them, and enter in the ordinary way. Where there is no need for a miracle, a miracle is never wrought. See on John 20:30.

The evangelist has omitted the appearing of our Lord to the other women who came from the tomb, Matthew 28:9, and that to the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, Luke 24:13, etc., which all happened in the course of this same day.

***Peace be unto you.***— His usual salutation and benediction. May every blessing of heaven and earth which you need be granted unto you!

**Verse 20. *He showed unto them his hands and his side.***— So it appears that his body bore the marks of the nails and the spear; and these marks were preserved that the disciples might be the more fully convinced of the reality of his resurrection.

**Verse 21. *Even so send I you.***— As I was sent to proclaim the truth of the Most High, and to convert sinners to God, I send you for the very same purpose, clothed with the very same authority, and influenced by the very same Spirit.

**Verse 22. *He breathed on them***— Intimating, by this, that they were to be made new men, in order to be properly qualified for the work to which he had called them; for in this breathing he evidently alluded to the first creation of man, when God breathed into him the breath of lives, and he became a living soul: the breath or Spirit of God (רוח אלהים ruach Elohim) being the grand principle and cause of his spiritual and Divine life.

***Receive ye the Holy Ghost***— From this act of our Lord, the influences of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men have been termed his inspiration; from in, into, and spiro, I breathe. Every word of Christ which is received in the heart by faith comes accompanied by this Divine breathing; and, without this, there is neither light nor life. Just as Adam was before God breathed the quickening spirit into him, so is every human soul till it receives this inspiration. Nothing is seen, known, discerned, or felt of God, but through this. To every private Christian this is essentially requisite; and no man ever did or ever can preach the Gospel of God, so as to convince and convert sinners, without it. “There are many (says pious Quesnel) who extol the dignity of the apostolic mission, and compare that of bishops and pastors with that of Christ; but with what shame and fear ought they to be filled, if they do but compare the life and deportment of Christ with the lives and conversation of those who glory in being made partakers of his mission. They may depend on it that, if sent at all, they are only sent on the same conditions, and for the same end, namely—to preach the truth, and to establish the kingdom of God, by opposing the corruption of the world; and by acting and suffering to the end, for the advancement of the glory of God. That person is no other than a monster in the Church who, by his sacred office, should be a dispenser of the Spirit, and who, by the corruption of his own heart, and by a disorderly, worldly, voluptuous, and scandalous life, is, at the same time, a member and instrument of the devil.”

**Verse 23. *Whose soever sins ye remit***— See the notes on Matthew 16:19; 18:18. It is certain God alone can forgive sins; and it would not only be blasphemous, but grossly absurd, to say that any creature could remit the guilt of a transgression which had been committed against the Creator. The apostles received from the Lord the doctrine of reconciliation, and the doctrine of condemnation. They who believed on the Son of God, in consequence of their preaching, had their sins remitted; and they who would not believe were declared to lie under condemnation. The reader is

desired to consult the note referred to above, where the custom to which our Lord alludes is particularly considered. Dr. Lightfoot supposes that the power of life and death, and the power of delivering over to Satan, which was granted to the apostles, is here referred to. This was a power which the primitive apostles exclusively possessed.

**Verse 24. *Thomas-called Didymus***— See this name explained, John 11:16.

***Was not with them***— And, by absenting himself from the company of the disciples, he lost this precious opportunity of seeing and hearing Christ; and of receiving (at this time) the inestimable blessing of the Holy Ghost. Where two or three are assembled in the name of Christ, he is in the midst of them. Christ had said this before: Thomas should have remembered it, and not have forsaken the company of the disciples. What is the consequence?—His unbelief becomes 1st. Utterly unreasonable. Ten of his brethren witnessed that they had seen Christ, John 20:25; but he rejected their testimony. 2dly. His unbelief became obstinate: he was determined not to believe on any evidence that it might please God to give him: he would believe according to his own prejudices, or not at all. 3dly. His unbelief became presumptuous and insolent: a view of the person of Christ will not suffice: he will not believe that it is he, unless he can put his finger into the holes made by the nails in his Lord's hand, and thrust his hand into the wound made by the spear in his side.

Thomas had lost much good, and gained much evil, and yet was insensible of his state. Behold the consequences of forsaking the assemblies of God's people! Jesus comes to the meeting—a disciple is found out of his place, who might have been there; and he is not only not blessed, but his heart becomes hardened and darkened through the deceitfulness of sin. It was through God's mere mercy that ever Thomas had another opportunity of being convinced of his error. Reader! take warning.

**Verse 26. *After eight days***— It seems likely that this was precisely on that day se'nnight, on which Christ had appeared to them before; and from this we may learn that this was the weekly meeting of the apostles; and, though Thomas was not found at the former meeting, he was determined not to be absent from this. According to his custom, Jesus came again; for

he cannot forget his promise—two or three are assembled in his name; and he has engaged to be among them.

**Verse 27. *Then saith he to Thomas***— Through his infinite compassion, he addressed him in a particular manner; condescending in this case to accommodate himself to the prejudices of an obstinate, though sincere, disciple.

***Reach hither thy finger***, etc.— And it is very probable that Thomas did so; for his unbelief was too deeply rooted to be easily cured.

**Verse 28. *Thomas answered***, etc.— Those who deny the Godhead of Christ would have us to believe that these words are an exclamation of Thomas, made through surprise, and that they were addressed to the Father and not to Christ. Theodore of Mopsuestia was the first, I believe, who gave the words this turn; and the fifth OEcumenic council, held at Constantinople, anathematized him for it. This was not according to the spirit of the Gospel of God. However, a man must do violence to every rule of construction who can apply the address here to any but Christ. The text is plain: Jesus comes in—sees Thomas, and addresses him; desiring him to come to him, and put his finger into the print of the nails, etc. Thomas, perfectly satisfied of the reality of our Lord's resurrection, says unto him,—MY LORD! and MY GOD! i.e. Thou art indeed the very same person,—my Lord whose disciple I have so long been; and thou art my God, henceforth the object of my religious adoration. Thomas was the first who gave the title of God to Jesus; and, by this glorious confession, made some amends for his former obstinate incredulity. It is worthy of remark, that from this time forward the whole of the disciples treated our Lord with the most supreme respect, never using that familiarity towards him which they had often used before. The resurrection from the dead gave them the fullest proof of the divinity of Christ. And this, indeed, is the use which St. John makes of this manifestation of Christ. See John 20:30, 31. Bishop Pearce says here: "Observe that Thomas calls Jesus his God, and that Jesus does not reprove him for it, though probably it was the first time he was called so." And, I would ask, could Jesus be jealous of the honor of the true God—could he be a prophet—could he be even an honest man, to permit his disciple to indulge in a mistake so monstrous and destructive, if it had been one?

**Verse 29. *Thomas***— This word is omitted by almost every MS., version, and ancient commentator of importance.

***Blessed are they***, etc.— Thou hast seen, and therefore thou hast believed, and now thou art blessed; thou art now happy-fully convinced of my resurrection; yet no less blessed shall all those be who believe in my resurrection, without the evidence thou hast had. From this we learn that to believe in Jesus, on the testimony of his apostles, will put a man into the possession of the very same blessedness which they themselves enjoyed. And so has God constituted the whole economy of grace that a believer, at eighteen hundred years' distance from the time of the resurrection, suffers no loss because he has not seen Christ in the flesh. The importance and excellence of implicit faith in the testimony of God is thus stated by Rab. Tanchum: “Rab. Simeon ben Lachesh saith, The proselyte is more beloved by the holy blessed God than that whole crowd that stood before Mount Sinai; for unless they had heard the thundering, and seen the flames and lightning, the hills trembling, and the trumpets sounding, they had not received the law. But the proselyte hath seen nothing of all this, and yet he hath come in, devoting himself to the holy blessed God, and hath taken upon him (the yoke of) the kingdom of heaven.”

Reader! Christ died for thee!—believe, and thou shalt be saved, and become as blessed and as happy as an apostle.

**Verse 30. *Many other signs truly did Jesus***, etc.— That is, besides the two mentioned here. John 20:19, 26, viz. Christ's entering into the house in a miraculous manner twice, notwithstanding the doors were fast shut: see on John 20:19. The other miracles which our Lord did, and which are not related here, were such as were necessary to the disciples only, and therefore not revealed to mankind at large. There is nothing in the whole revelation of God but what is for some important purpose, and there is nothing left out that could have been of any real use.

**Verse 31. *That ye might believe***— What is here recorded is to give a full proof of the Divinity of Christ; that he is the promised Messiah; that he really suffered and rose again from the dead; and that through him every believer might have eternal life.



*Life*— Several MSS., versions, and fathers read eternal life, and this is undoubtedly the meaning of the word, whether the various reading be admitted or not.

GROTIUS has conjectured that the Gospel, as written by St. John, ended with this chapter, and that the following chapter was added by the Church of Ephesus. This conjecture is supported by nothing in antiquity. It is possible that these two last verses might have formerly been at the conclusion of the last chapter, as they bear a very great similarity to those that are found there; and it is likely that their true place is between the 24th and 25th verses of the succeeding chapter; {John 21:24, 25}; with the latter of which they in every respect correspond, and with it form a proper conclusion to the book. Except this correspondence, there is no authority for changing their present position.

After reading the Gospel of John, his first Epistle should be next taken up: it is written exactly in the same spirit, and keeps the same object steadily in view. As John's Gospel may be considered a supplement to the other evangelists, so his first Epistle may be considered a supplement and continuation to his own Gospel. In some MSS. the epistles follow this Gospel, not merely because the transcribers wished to have all the works of the same writer together, but because there was such an evident connection between them. The first Epistle is to the Gospel as a pointed and forcible application is to an interesting and impressive sermon.

## CHAPTER 21.

*Jesus shows himself to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, 1-5. The miraculous draught of fishes, 6-11. He dines with his disciples, 12-14. Questions Peter concerning his love to him, and gives him commission to feed his sheep, 15-17. Foretells the manner of Peter's death, 18, 19. Peter inquires concerning John, and receives an answer that was afterwards misunderstood, 20-23. John's concluding testimony concerning the authenticity of his Gospel, and the end for which it was written, 24, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21.

**Verse 1.** *Jesus showed himself again*— After that our Lord had appeared several times to the women, and to the apostles at Jerusalem, and at the tomb, he bade them go into Galilee, giving them the promise of meeting them there: Matthew 28:7; Mark 16:7. This promise we find he fulfilled in the way John relates here. This was the seventh appearance of our Lord after the resurrection. Matthew, Matthew 28:16, has but just mentioned it: of it the rest of the evangelists say nothing, and this is the reason why John gives it so particularly.

**Verse 3.** *Peter saith-I go a fishing*.— Previously to the crucifixion of our Lord, the temporal necessities of himself and his disciples appear to have been supplied by the charity of individuals: Luke 8:3. As it is probable that the scandal of the cross had now shut up this source of support, the disciples, not fully knowing how they were to be employed, purposed to return to their former occupation of fishing, in order to gain a livelihood; and therefore the seven, mentioned John 21:2, embarked on the sea of Tiberias, otherwise called the sea of Galilee.

*That night they caught nothing*.— God had so ordered it, that they might be the more struck with the miracle which he afterwards wrought.

**Verse 4.** *Knew not that it was Jesus*.— Probably because it was either not light enough, or he was at too great a distance, or he had assumed another

form, as in Mark 16:12; otherwise his person was so remarkable that all his disciples readily knew him when he was at hand: see John 21:12.

**Verse 5. *Children***— **παιδία**, a term of familiarity and affectionate kindness: it is the vocative case plural of **παιδιον**, which is the diminutive of **παις**, and literally signifies little children, or beloved children. How the margin has made sirs out of it I cannot conceive.

***Any meat***— **προσφαγιον** from **προς**, besides, and **φαγω**, I eat; any thing that is eaten with bread, or such like solid substances, to make the deglutition the more easy: here it evidently means any kind of fish; and our Lord seems to have appeared at first in the character of a person who wished to purchase a part of what they had caught: see the note on John 6:9.

**Verse 6. *And ye shall find***.— The Aethiopic, three copies of the Itala, and St. Cyril, add, They said therefore unto him, we have labored all the night and caught nothing, nevertheless at thy command we will let down the net. This is borrowed from Luke 5:5.

***For the multitude of fishes***.— This was intended as an emblem of the immense number of souls which should be converted to God by their ministry; according to the promise of Christ, Matthew 4:19.

**Verse 7. *His fisher's coat***— Or, his upper coat. **επενδυτην**, from **επι**, upon, and **ενδυω**, I clothe; something analogous to what we term a great coat or surtout.

***He was naked***— He was only in his vest. **γυμνος**, naked, is often used to signify the absence of this upper garment only. In 1 Samuel 19:24, when Saul had put off his **ιματια**, upper garments, he is said to have been **γυμνος**, naked; and David, when girded only with a linen ephod, is said to have been uncovered, in 2 Samuel 6:14, 20. To which may be added what we read in the Sept. Job 22:6, Thou hast taken away the covering of the naked; **αμφιασιν γυμνων**, the plaid or blanket in which they wrapped themselves, and besides which they had none other. In this sense it is that Virgil says, Geor. i. 299: Nudus ara, sere nudus, i.e. strip off your upper garments, and work till you sweat. See more examples in Bp. Pearce.

***Cast himself into the sea.***— It is likely that they were in very shallow water; and, as they were only two hundred cubits from the land, (about one hundred and thirty-two English yards,) it is possible that Peter only stepped into the water that he might assist them to draw the boat to land, which was now heavily laden. It is not likely that he went into the water in order to swim ashore; had he intended this, it is not to be supposed that he would have put his great coat on, which must have been an essential hinderance to him in getting to shore.

**Verse 8. *Dragging the net***— It is probable that this was that species of fishing in which the net was stretched from the shore out into the sea; the persons who were in the boat, and who shot the net, fetched a compass, and bringing in a hawser, which was attached to the other end of the net, those who were on shore helped them to drag it in. As the net was sunk with weights to the bottom, and the top floated on the water by corks, or pieces of light wood, all the fish that happened to come within the compass of the net were of course dragged to shore. The sovereign power of Christ had in this case miraculously collected the fish to that part where he ordered the disciples to cast the net.

**Verse 9. *They saw a fire***, etc.— This appears to have been a new miracle. It could not have been a fire which the disciples had there, for it is remarked as something new; besides, they had caught no fish, John 21:5, and here was a small fish upon the coals, and a loaf of bread provided to eat with it. The whole appears to have been miraculously prepared by Christ.

**Verse 12. *Come and dine***.— *δευτε αριστησατε*. Though this is the literal translation of the word, yet it must be observed that it was not dinner time, being as yet early in the morning, John 21:4; but Kypke has largely shown that the original word is used by Homer, Xenophon, and Plutarch, to signify breakfast, or any early meal, as well as what we term dinner. It might perhaps appear singular, otherwise it would be as agreeable to the use of the Greek word, to have translated it, come and breakfast.

***Durst ask him***— Ever since the confession of Thomas, a proper awe of the Deity of Christ had possessed their minds.

**Verse 13. *And giveth them***— Eating likewise with them, as Luke expressly says: Luke 24:43.

**Verse 14. *This is now the third time***— That is, this was the third time he appeared unto the apostles, when all or most of them were together. He appeared to ten of them, John 20:19; again to eleven of them, John 20:26; and at this time to seven of them, John 21:2. But, when the other evangelists are collated, we shall find that this was the seventh time in which he had manifested himself after he arose from the dead. 1st. He appeared to Mary of Magdala, Mark 16:9; John 20:15, 16. 2ndly, To the holy women who came from the tomb. Matthew 28:9. 3dly, To the two disciples who went to Emmaus, Luke 24:13, etc. 4thly, To St. Peter alone, Luke 24:34. 5thly, To the ten, in the absence of Thomas, John 20:19. 6thly, Eight days after to the eleven, Thomas being present; John 20:26. 7thly, To the seven, mentioned in John 21:2; which was between the eighth and fortieth day after his resurrection. Besides these seven appearances, he showed himself, 8thly, To the disciples on a certain mountain in Galilee, Matthew 28:16. If the appearance mentioned by St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:6, to upwards of 500 brethren at once—if this be not the same with his appearance on a mountain in Galilee, it must be considered the ninth. According to the same apostle, he was seen of James, 1 Corinthians 15:7, which may have been the tenth appearance. And, after this, to all the apostles, when, at Bethany, he ascended to heaven in their presence. See Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-12; 1 Corinthians 15:7. This appears to have been the eleventh time in which he distinctly manifested himself after his resurrection. But there might have been many other manifestations, which the evangelists have not thought proper to enumerate, as not being connected with any thing of singular weight or importance.

**Verse 15. *Simon lovest thou me***— Peter had thrice denied his Lord, and now Christ gives him an opportunity in some measure to repair his fault by a triple confession.

***More than these?***— This was a kind of reproach to Peter: he had professed a more affectionate attachment to Christ than the rest; he had been more forward in making professions of friendship and love than any of the others; and no one (Judas excepted) had treated his Lord so basely.

As he had before intimated that his attachment to his Master was more than that of the rest, our Lord now puts the question to him, Dost thou love me more than these? To which Peter made the most modest reply-*Thou knowest I love thee, but no longer dwells on the strength of his love, nor compares himself with even the meanest of his brethren. He had before cast the very unkind reflection on his brethren, Though all be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended, Matthew 26:33. But he had now learned, by dreadful experience, that he who trusteth his own heart is a fool; and that a man's sufficiency for good is of the Lord alone.*

The words, more than these, Bishop Pearce thinks refer to the provisions they were eating, or to their secular employments; for says he, "It does not seem probable that Jesus should put a question to Peter which he could not possibly answer; because he could only know his own degree of love for Jesus, not that of the other disciples." But it appears to me that our Lord refers to the profession made by Peter, which I have quoted above.

It is remarkable that in these three questions our Lord uses the verb *αγαπαω*, which signifies to love affectionately, ardently, supremely, perfectly-see the note on Matthew 21:37; and that Peter always replies, using the verb *φιλεω*, which signifies to love, to like, to regard, to feel friendship for another. As if our Lord had said, "Peter, dost thou love me ardently and supremely?" To which he answers, "Lord, I feel an affection for thee-I do esteem thee-but dare, at present, say no more."

There is another remarkable change of terms in this place. In John 21:15, 17, our Lord uses the verb *βοσκηδω*, to feed, and in John 21:16 he uses the word *ποιμαινω*, which signifies to tend a flock, not only to feed, but to take care of, guide, govern, defend, etc., by which he seems to intimate that it is not sufficient merely to offer the bread of life to the congregation of the Lord, but he must take care that the sheep be properly collected, attended to, regulated, guided, etc.; and it appears that Peter perfectly comprehended our Lord's meaning, and saw that it was a direction given not only to him, and to the rest of the disciples, but to all their successors in the Christian ministry; for himself says, 1 John 5:2: Feed the flock of God (*ποιμανατε το ποιμνιον του θεου*) which is among you, taking the

oversight (ἐπισκοποῦντες, acting as superintendents and guardians,) not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Every spiritual shepherd of Christ has a flock, composed of LAMBS-young converts, and SHEEP-experienced Christians, to feed, guide, regulate, and govern. To be properly qualified for this, his wisdom and holiness should always exceed those of his flock. Who is sufficient for these things? The man who lives in God, and God in him.

To the answer of Christ, in John 21:16, the later Syriac adds, If thou lovest me and esteemest me, feed my sheep.

**Verse 17. *Peter was grieved***— Fearing, says St. Chrysostom, lest Christ saw something in his heart which he saw not himself, and which might lead to another fall; and that Christ was about to tell him of it, as he had before predicted his denial.

**Verse 18. *Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands***— Wetstein observes that it was a custom at Rome to put the necks of those who were to be crucified into a yoke, and to stretch out their hands and fasten them to the end of it; and having thus led them through the city they were carried out to be crucified. See his note on this place. Thus then Peter was girded, chained, and carried whither he would not-not that he was unwilling to die for Christ; but he was a man-he did not love death; but he loved his life less than he loved his God.

**Verse 19. *Should glorify God***.— Ancient writers state that, about thirty-four years after this, Peter was crucified; and that he deemed it so glorious a thing to die for Christ that he begged to be crucified with his head downwards, not considering himself worthy to die in the same posture in which his Lord did. So Eusebius, Prudentius, Chrysostom, and Augustin. See Calmet.

***Follow me***.— Whether our Lord meant by these words that Peter was to walk with him a little way for a private interview, or whether he meant that he was to imitate his example, or be conformed to him in the manner of his death, is very uncertain.

**Verse 22. *If I will that he tarry till I come***— There are several opinions concerning this: the following are the principal. 1. Some have concluded from these words that John should never die. Many eminent men, ancients

and moderns, have been and are of this opinion. 2. Others thought that our Lord intimated that John should live till Christ came to judge and destroy Jerusalem. On this opinion it is observed that Peter, who was the oldest of the apostles, died in the year 67, which, says Calmet, was six years before the destruction of Jerusalem; and that John survived the ruin of that city about thirty years, he being the only one of the twelve who was alive when the above desolation took place. 3. St. Augustin, Bede, and others, understood the passage thus: If I will that he remain till I come and take him away by a natural death, what is that to thee? follow thou me to thy crucifixion. On this it may be observed, that all antiquity agrees that John, if he did die, was the only disciple who was taken away by a natural death. 4. Others imagine that our Lord was only now taking Peter aside to speak something to him in private, and that Peter, seeing John following, wished to know whether he should come along with them; and that our Lord's answer stated that John should remain in that place till Christ and Peter returned to him; and to this meaning of the passage many eminent critics incline. For neatly eighteen hundred years, the greatest men in the world have been puzzled with this passage. It would appear intolerable in me to attempt to decide, where so many eminent doctors have disagreed, and do still disagree. I rather lean to the fourth opinion. See the conclusion of the Preface to this Gospel.

**Verse 24. *This is the disciple***— It is, I think, very likely that these two verses were added by some of the believers at that time, as a testimony to the truth of the preceding narration; and I allow, with Bishop Pearce and others, that it is possible that John may mean himself when he says *WE know, etc.*, yet, I think that it is very unlikely. It is certain that this Gospel loses no part of its authority in admitting the suffrage of the Church of God: it rather strengthens the important truths which are delivered in it; and in the mouths of so many witnesses the sacred matters which concern the peace and salvation of the world, are still more abundantly established. See the last note on the preceding chapter. {John 21:25}

***We know***— Instead of *οιδαμεν*, we know, some have written *οιδαμεν*, I know indeed; but this is mere conjecture, and is worthy of no regard. It is likely that these verses were added by those to whom John gave his work in charge.



**Verse 25. *Many other things***— Before his disciples, is added by two MSS. The Scholia in several MSS. intimate that this verse is an addition; but it is found in every ancient version, and in Origen, Cyril, and Chrysostom.

***Could not contain***, etc.— Origen's signification of the word *χωρειν* is to admit of, or receive favourably. As if he had said, the miracles of Christ are so many, and so astonishing, that if the whole were to be detailed, the world would not receive the account with proper faith; but enough is recorded that men may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that in believing they may have life through his name: John 20:31.

We have already seen that this apostle often uses the term world to designate the Jewish people only; and if it have this sense here, which is possible, it will at once vindicate the above exposition of the word *χωρειν*. As if he had said, Were I to detail all the signs and miracles which Jesus did among his disciples, and in the private families where he sojourned, the Jewish people themselves would not receive nor credit these accounts; but enough is written to prove that this Christ was the promised Messiah.

Bishop Pearce has a very judicious note here, of which what follows is an abstract, with a few additions.

Even the world itself, etc. This is a very strong eastern expression, to represent the number of miracles which Jesus wrought. But, however strong and strange this expression may seem to us of the western world, we find sacred and other authors using hyperboles of the like kind and signification. In Numbers 13:33, the spies who returned from the search of the land of Canaan say that they saw giants there of such a prodigious size that they were in their own sight as grasshoppers. In Daniel 4:11, mention is made of a tree, whereof the height reached unto the heaven; and the sight thereof unto the end of all the earth. And the author of Ecclesiasticus, in 47:15, speaking of Solomon's wisdom, says, Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou filledst it with parables: so here, by one degree more of hyperbole, it is said that the world would not contain all the books which should be written concerning Jesus's miracles, if the particular account of every one of them were given. In Josephus, Antiq. lib. xix. c. 20, God is mentioned as promising to Jacob that he would give the land of Canaan to

him and his seed; and then it is added, *οι πληρουσι πασαν, οσην ηλιος ορα, και γην και θαλασσαν*. They shall fill all, whatsoever the sun illuminates, whether earth or sea. Philo in his tract Deuteronomy Ebriet, T. i. p. 362, 10, is observed to speak after the same manner, *ουδε γαρ των δωρων ικανος ουδεις χωρησαι το αφθονον πληθος, ισως δ' αυδ' ο κοσμος*. Neither is any one able to contain the vast abundance of gifts; nor is the world capable of it. And in his tract Deuteronomy Posterit. Caini, T. i. p. 253, l. 38, he says, speaking of the fullness of God, *ουδε γαρ εις (ει) πλουτον επιδεικνυσθαι βουληθειη τον εαυτου, χωρησαι αν, ηπειρωθεις και θαλαττης, η συμπασα γη*. And should he will to draw out his fullness, the whole compass of sea and land could not contain it."

Homer, who, if not born in Asia Minor, had undoubtedly lived there, has sometimes followed the hyperbolic manner of speaking which prevailed so much in the east, as in Iliad, b. xx. he makes AENEAS say to Achilles: —

αλλ' αγε μηκετι ταυτα λεγωμεθα, νηπυτιοι ως,  
 'εσταοτ' εν μεσση υσμινη δηιοτητος.  
 εστι γαρ αμφοτεροισιν ονειδεα μυθησασθαι  
 πολλα μαλ' ουδ' αν νηυς εκατονζυγος αχθος αροιτο.  
 στρεπτη δε γλωσσ' εστι βροτων, πολεις δ' ενι μυθοι,  
 παντοιοι· επεων δε πολυς νομος ενθα και ενθα.  
 'οπποιον κ' ειπησθα επος, τοιον κ' επακουσαις.

Iliad, xx. v. 244-250.

*But wherefore should we longer waste the time  
 In idle prate, while battle roars around?  
 Reproach is cheap. With ease we might discharge  
 Gibes at each other, till a ship that asks  
 A hundred oars should sink beneath the load.  
 The tongue of man is voluble, hath words  
 For every theme, nor wants wide field and long;  
 And, as he speaks, so shall he hear again.*

*COWPER.*

Few instances of any thing like these have been found in the western world; and yet it has been observed that Cicero, in Philip ii. 44, uses a similar form: Praesertim cum illi eam gloriam consecuti sunt, quae vix coelo capi posse videatur—"especially when they pursued that glory which heaven itself seems scarcely sufficient to contain." And Livy also, in vii.

25, *Hae vires populi Romani, quas vix terrarum capit orbis*—"these energies of the Roman people, which the terraqueous globe can scarcely contain."

We may define hyperbole thus: it is a figure of speech where more seems to be said than is intended; and it is well known that the Asiatic nations abound in these. In Deuteronomy 1:28, cities with high walls round about them are said to be walled up to heaven. Now, what is the meaning of this hyperbole? Why, that the cities had very high walls: then, is the hyperbole a truth? Yes, for we should attach no other idea to these expressions than the authors intended to convey by them. Now, the author of this expression never designed to intimate that the cities had walls which reached to heaven; nor did one of his countrymen understand it in this sense—they affixed no other idea to it, (for the words, in common use, conveyed no other,) than that these cities had very high walls. When John, therefore, wrote, the world itself could not contain the books, etc., what would every Jew understand by it! Why, that if every thing which Christ had done and said were to be written, the books would be more in number than had ever been written concerning any one person or subject: i.e. there would be an immense number of books. And so there would be; for it is not possible that the ten thousandth part of the words and actions of such a life as our Lord's was could be contained in the compass of one or all of these Gospels.

There is a hyperbole very like this, taken from the Jewish writers, and inserted by BASNAGE, *Hist. des Juifs*, liv. iii. c. 1, s. 9. "Jochanan succeeded Simeon—he attained the age of Moses—he employed forty years in commerce, and in pleading before the Sanhedrin. He composed such a great number of precepts and lessons, that if the heavens were paper, and all the trees of the forest so many pens, and all the children of men so many scribes, they would not suffice to write all his lessons!" Now, what meaning did the author of this hyperbole intend to convey? Why, that Jochanan had given more lessons than all his contemporaries or predecessors. Nor does any Jew in the universe understand the words in any other sense. It is worthy of remark that this Jochanan lived in the time of St. John; for he was in Jerusalem when it was besieged by Vespasian. See Basnage, as above.

There is another quoted by the same author, *ibid.* c. v. s. 7, where, speaking of Eliezar, one of the presidents of the Sanhedrin, it is said: “Although the firmament were vellum, and the waters of the ocean were chanced into ink, it would not be sufficient to describe all the knowledge of Eliezar; for he made not less than three hundred constitutions concerning the manner of cultivating cucumbers.” Now, what did the rabbin mean by this hyperbole? Why, no more than that Eliezar was the greatest naturalist in his time; and had written and spoken more on that subject and others than any of his contemporaries. This Eliezar flourished about seventy-three years after Christ. It is farther worthy of remark that this man also is stated to have lived in the time of St. John. John is supposed to have died A. D. 99.

Hyperboles of this kind, common to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south, may be found every where; and no soul is puzzled with them but the critics. The above examples, I trust, are sufficient to vindicate and explain the words in the text. It is scarcely necessary to add that the common French expression, *tout le monde*, which literally means the whole world, is used in a million of instances to signify the people present at one meeting, or the majority of them, and often the members of one particular family. And yet no man who understands the language ever imagines that any besides the congregation in the one case, or the family in the other, is intended.

**Amen.**— This word is omitted by ABCD, several others; Syriac, all the Arabic, and both the Persic; the Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Armenian, Syriac Hieros., Vulgate, and all the Itala but three.

The word אָמֵן *amen*, which has passed unaltered into almost all the languages of the world in which the sacred writings are extant, is pure Hebrew; and signifies to be steady, constant, firm, established, or confirmed. It is used as a particle of affirmation and adjuration. When a person was sworn to the truth of any fact, the oath was recited to him, and he bound himself by simply saying, אָמֵן אָמֵן *amen, amen*. See an instance of this, Numbers 5:22. In Deuteronomy 27:15-26, it is to be understood in the same sense; the persons who use it binding themselves, under the curse there pronounced, should they do any of the things there prohibited. It is often used as a particle of affirmation, approbation, and consent, examples

of which frequently occur in the Old Testament. When any person commenced a discourse or testimony with this word, it was considered in the light of an oath; as if he had said, I pledge my truth, my honor, and my life to the certainty of what I now state.

Our Lord begins many of his discourses with this word, either singly, Amen, I say unto you; or doubled, Amen, amen, I say unto you; which we translate verily: as Christ uses it, we may ever understand it as expressing an absolute and incontrovertible truth. Instances of the use of the single term frequently occur: see Matthew 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16; 8:10; 10:15, 23, 42, etc., etc.; but it is remarkable that it is doubled by St. John, see John 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; John 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20, 21, 38; John 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18; and is never found iterated by any of the other evangelists. Some have supposed that the word אמן is contracted, and contains the initials of אדני מלך נעמן Adonai Malec Neeman, my Lord the faithful King; to whom the person who uses it is always understood to make his appeal. Christ is himself called the Amen, ο αμην, Revelation 1:18; 3:14; because of the eternity of his nature and the unchangeableness of his truth. In later ages, it was placed at the end of all the books in the New Testament, except the Acts, the Epistle of James, and the third Epistle of John, merely as the transcriber's attestation to their truth; and, perhaps, it is sometimes to be understood as vouching to the fidelity of his own transcript.

The subscriptions to this Gospel, as well as to the preceding Gospels, are various in the different versions and manuscripts. The following are those which appear most worthy of being noticed.

“The most holy Gospel of the preaching of John the evangelist, which he spake and proclaimed in the Greek language at Ephesus, is finished.”-SYRIAC in Bib. Polyglott.

“With the assistance of the supreme God, the Gospel of St. John the son of Zebedee, the beloved of the Lord, and the preacher of eternal life, is completed. And it is the conclusion of the four most holy and vivifying Gospels, by the blessing of God. Amen.”-ARABIC in Bib. Polyglott.

“The four glorious Gospels, of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are completed.”-PERSIC in Bib. Polyglott.

Other subscriptions are as follow: —

“The end of the holy Gospel of John-delivered thirty years-thirty-two years after the ascension of Christ-in the Isle of Patmos-in the Greek tongue at Ephesus-under the reign of Domitian-written by John when he was an exile in Patmos-under the Emperor Trajan-and delivered in Ephesus by Gaius the host of the apostles. John, having returned from his exile in Patmos, composed his Gospel, being 100 years of age and lived to the age of 120.”-SUIDAS.

In an AETHIOPIC MS. in the royal library in Paris, at the conclusion of this evangelist are these words:—”Now the sum of all the clauses of the four Gospels is 9700.-By the grace of the Lord, here are ended the four Gospels. The sections of the four Gospels are 217. The clauses of the holy Gospel, even from its beginning to its end, namely, the writing of St. John, are completed.”

It may be just necessary to inform the reader that the most ancient MSS. have scarcely any subscription at all, and that there is no dependence to be placed on any thing of this kind found in the others; most of the transcribers making conclusions according to their different fancies. See the concluding note of the preceding chapter; and see the preface to this Gospel, where other subjects relative to it are discussed.

## PREFACE

### TO THE

### ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE book of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES forms the fifth, and last, of the historical books of the New Testament. And on this account it has been generally placed at the end of the four Gospels; though in several MSS. and versions it is found at the end of St. Paul's Epistles, as many circumstances in them are referred to by the narrative contained in this book, which is carried down almost to the apostle's death.

This book has had a variety of names: *πραξεις των αποστολων*, the Res Gestae, Acts or Transactions of the Apostles, is the title it bears in the Codex Bezae. *πραξεις των ἁγιων αποστολων*, The Acts of the Holy Apostles, is its title in the Codex Alexandrinus, and several others, as well as in several of the ancient versions, and in the Greek and Latin fathers. One or other form of the above title is followed by almost all the editors of the Greek Testament, and translators and commentators in general. By some it has been reckoned a fifth Gospel; and by OEcumenius it is termed, The Gospel of the Holy Spirit; and by St. Chrysostom, *το βιβλιον, αποδειξις αναστασεως*, The Book, The Demonstration of the Resurrection. These two last characters are peculiarly descriptive of its contents. All the promises which Christ gave of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are shown here to have been fulfilled in the most eminent manner; and, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of our blessed Lord has been fully demonstrated. The calling of the Gentiles is another grand point which is here revealed and illustrated. This miracle of miracles, as one terms it, which had been so frequently foretold by the prophets and by Christ himself, is here exhibited; and by this grand act of the power and goodness of God the Christian Church has been founded and thus the tabernacle and kingdom of God have been immutably

established among men. It is truly a fifth Gospel, as it contains the glad tidings of peace and salvation to the whole Gentile world.

All antiquity is unanimous in ascribing this book to St. Luke as the author; and, from the commencement of it, we see plainly that it can be attributed to no other; and it seems plain that St. Luke intended it as a continuation of his Gospel, being dedicated to Theophilus, to whom he had dedicated the former; and to which, in the introduction to this, he expressly refers: indeed he has taken up the narrative, in this book precisely in the place where he had dropped it in the other. The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, etc.; and from this we may form a safe conjecture, that the two books were written at no greater a distance from each other than the time of the last occurrence recorded in this book. Some have supposed that this book was written from Alexandria; but this does not appear to be probable. The conjecture of Michaelis is much more likely, viz. that it was written from Rome, at which place St. Luke mentions his arrival, in company with St. Paul, shortly before the close of the book. See Acts 28:16.

Though the time in which the book of the Acts was written is not recorded, yet the same writer observes that, as it is continued to the end of the second year of St. Paul's imprisonment, it could not have been written before the year 63; and, had it been written after that year, it is reasonable to conclude that it would have related some farther particulars relative to St. Paul; or would at least have mentioned the event of his imprisonment, in which the reader is so much interested. This argument seems conclusive, in reference to the date of this book.

St. Luke's long attendance upon St. Paul, and his having been himself eye-witness to many of the facts which he has recorded, independently of his Divine inspiration, render him a most respectable and credible historian. His medical knowledge, for he is allowed to have been a physician, enabled him, as Professor Michaelis has properly observed, both to form a proper judgment of the miraculous cures which were performed by St. Paul, and to give an account and authentic detail of them. It is worthy also of observation that St. Luke himself does not appear to have possessed the gift of miraculous healing. Though there can be no



doubt that he was with St. Paul when shipwrecked at Malta, yet he was not concerned in healing the father of Publius the governor; nor of the other sick persons mentioned Acts 28:8, 9. These were all healed by the prayers of St. Paul, and the imposition of his hands, and consequently miraculously; nor do we find any evidence that St. Luke was ever employed in this way. This is another proof of the wisdom of God: had the physician been employed to work miracles of healing, the excellence of the power would have been attributed to the skill of the man, and not to the power of his Maker.

The Acts of the Apostles have been generally considered in the light of a Church History, and, consequently, the first ecclesiastical history on record; but Professor Michaelis very properly contends that it cannot have been intended as a general history of the Christian Church, even for the period of time it embraces, as it passes by all the transactions of the Church at Jerusalem, after the conversion of St. Paul; the propagation of Christianity in Egypt; Paul's journey into Arabia; the state of Christianity at Babylon; (1Pe 5:13;) the foundation of the Christian Church at Rome; several of St. Paul's voyages; his thrice suffering shipwreck, etc., etc. See more particulars in Lardner and Michaelis.

The object of St. Luke appears to have been twofold: 1. To relate in what manner the gifts of the Holy Spirit were communicated on the day of pentecost, and the subsequent miracles performed by the apostles, by which the truth of Christianity was confirmed. 2. To deliver such accounts as proved the claim of the Gentiles to admission into the Church of Christ; a claim disputed by the Jews, especially at the time when the Acts of the Apostles were written. Hence we see the reason why he relates, Acts 8:1-25, the conversion of the Samaritans; and Acts 10:1-11:-18, the story of Cornelius, and the determination of the council in Jerusalem relative to the Levitical law; and for the same reason he is more diffuse in his account of St. Paul's conversion, and his preaching to the Gentiles, than he is on any other subject. In such a restricted manner has St. Luke compiled his history, that Michaelis is of opinion that it was the intention of this apostle to record only those facts which he had either seen himself, or heard from eye witnesses. *Introduct. vol. v. p. 326, etc.*

The book of the Acts has been uniformly and universally received by the Christian Church in all places and ages: it is mentioned and quoted by almost every Christian writer, and its authenticity and importance universally admitted. Arator, a subdeacon in the Church at Rome, in the sixth century, turned it into verse. In ancient times, personal history and important transactions, in most nations, were generally thus preserved; as the facts, through the medium of verse, could be the more easily committed to memory.

St. Luke's narration bears every evidence of truth and authenticity. It is not a made up history. The language and manner of every speaker are different; and the same speaker is different in his manner, according to the audience he addresses. The speeches of Stephen, Peter, Cornelius, Tertullus, and Paul, are all different, and such as we might naturally expect from the characters in question, and the circumstances in which they were at the time of speaking. St. Paul's speeches are also suited to the occasion, and to the persons before whom he spoke. When his audience was heathen, though he kept the same end steadily in view, yet how different is his mode of address from that used when before a Jewish audience! Several of these peculiarities, which constitute a strong evidence of the authenticity of the work, shall be pointed out in the notes. See some good remarks on this head, in Michaelis' Introduction, *ubi supra*.

As St. Luke has not annexed any date to the transactions he records, it is not a very easy matter to adjust the chronology of the Acts; but, as in some places he refers to political facts, the exact times of which are well known, the dates of several transactions in his narrative may be settled with considerable accuracy. It is well known, for instance that the famine mentioned Acts 11:29, 30, happened in the fourth year of the Emperor Claudius, which answers to the forty-fourth of the Christian aera. From facts of this nature, dates may be derived with considerable accuracy: all such dates are carefully noted at the top of the column, as in the preceding parts of this Commentary; and the chronology is adjusted in the best manner possible. In some cases, conjecture and probability are the only lights by which this obscure passage can be illuminated. The dates of the commencement and the end of the book are tolerably certain; as the work certainly begins with the twenty-ninth year of the Christian aera, Acts 1:1 and ends probably with the sixty-third, Acts 28:30.

In the book of the Acts we see how the Church of Christ was formed and settled. The apostles simply proclaim the truth of God relative to the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; and God accompanies their testimony with the demonstration of his Spirit. What was the consequence? Thousands acknowledge the truth, embrace Christianity, and openly profess it at the most imminent risk of their lives. The change is not a change of merely one religious sentiment or mode of worship for another; but a change of tempers, passions, prospects, and moral conduct. All before was earthly, or animal, or devilish; or all these together; but now all is holy, spiritual, and Divine: the heavenly influence becomes extended, and nations are born unto God. And how was all this brought about? Not by might nor power: not by the sword, nor by secular authority; not through worldly motives and prospects; not by pious frauds or cunning craftiness; not by the force of persuasive eloquence: in a word, by nothing but the sole influence of truth itself, attested to the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. Wherever religious frauds and secular influence have been used to found or support a Church; professing itself to be Christian, there, we may rest assured, is the fullest evidence that that Church is wholly antichristian; and where such a Church, possessing secular power, has endeavored to support itself by persecution, and persecution unto privation of goods, of liberty, and of life, it not only shows itself to be antichristian, but also diabolic. The religion Of Christ stands in no need either of human cunning or power. It is the religion of God, and is to be propagated by his power: this the book of the Acts fully shows; and in it we find the true model, after which every Christian Church should be builded. As far as any Church can show that it has followed this model, so far it is holy and apostolic. And when all Churches or congregations of people professing Christianity, shall be founded and regulated according to the doctrines and discipline laid down in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, then the aggregate body may be justly called, The Holy, Apostolic, and Catholic Church.

The simplicity of the primitive Christian worship, as laid down in the book of the Acts, is worthy of particular notice and admiration. Here are no expensive ceremonies: no apparatus calculated merely to impress the senses, and produce emotions in the animal system, "to help," as has been foolishly said, "the spirit of devotion." The heart is the subject in which

this spirit of devotion is kindled; and the Spirit of GOD alone is the agent that communicates and maintains the celestial fire; and God, who knows and searches that heart, is the object of its adoration, and the only source whence it expects the grace that pardons, sanctifies, and renders it happy. No strange fire can be brought to this altar: for the God of the Christians can be worshipped only in spirit and truth; the truth revealed, directing the worship; and the Spirit given, applying that truth, and giving life and energy to every faculty and power. Thus God was worshipped in his own way, and through his own power; every religious act, thus performed, was acceptable to him; the praises of his followers rose up as incense before the throne, and their prayers were heard and answered. As they had but one God, so they had but one Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ. They received him as the gift of God's eternal love; sought and found redemption in his blood; and, in a holy and useful life, showed forth the virtues of Him who had called them from darkness into his marvellous light; for no profession of faith was then considered of any worth that was not supported by that love to God and man which is the fulfilling of the law, which is the life and soul of obedience to the Divine testimonies, and the ceaseless spring of benevolence and humanity. This is the religion of Jesus Christ, as laid down and exemplified in this blessed book.

*“Ye different sects, who all declare,  
 LO! CHRIST is here, and CHRIST is there,  
 Your stronger proofs divinely give,  
 And show me where the Christians live.”*

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

-Usherian year of the world, 4033. -Alexandrian aera of the world, 5531. -Antiochian year of the world, 5521. -Constantinopolitan year of the world, 5537. -Year of the aera of the Seleucidae, 341. -Year of the Spanish aera, 67. -Year of the Christian aera, 29. -Year of the Paschal Cycle, 30. -Year of the Jewish Cycle, 11. -Golden Number, 8. -Solar Cycle, 10. -Dominical Letter, B. -Jewish Passover, April 15. -Epect, 20. -Year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius Caesar, 18. -Year of the CCII. Olympiad, 1. -Year of Rome, 782. -Consuls, from Jan. 1, to July 1, L. Rubellius Geminus, and C. Rufius Geminus; and, for the remainder of the year, Aulus Plautius and L. Nonius Asprenas.

For an explanation of these aeras, see the Advertisement prefixed to the Comment on the Gospel of St Matthew.

### CHAPTER 1.

*St. Luke's prologue, containing a repetition of Christ's history from his passion till his ascension, 1-9. Remarkable circumstances in the ascension, 10, 11. The return of the disciples to Jerusalem, and their employment there, 12-14. Peter's discourse concerning the death of Judas Iscariot, 15-20, and the necessity of choosing another apostle in his place, 21, 22. Barnabas and Matthias being set apart by prayer, the apostles having given their votes, Matthias is chosen to succeed Judas, 23-26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1.** *The former treatise*— The Gospel according to Luke, which is here most evidently intended.

*O Theophilus*— See the note on Luke 1:3.

**To do and teach**— These two words comprise his miracles and sermons. This introduction seems to intimate that, as he had already in his Gospel given an account of the life and actions of our Lord, so in this second treatise he was about to give an account of the lives and acts of some of the chief apostles, such as Peter and Paul.

**Verse 2. *After that he, through the Holy Ghost***, etc.— This clause has been variously translated: the simple meaning seems to be this—that Christ communicated the Holy Spirit to his disciples, after his resurrection, as he had not done before. In Luke 24:45, it is said that he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and in John 20:22, that he breathed on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Previously to this, we may suppose that the disciples were only on particular occasions made partakers of the Holy Spirit; but from this time it is probable that they had a measure of this supernatural light and power constantly resident in them. By this they were not only able to proclaim the truth, but to discern the meaning of all the Old Testament Scriptures which referred to Christ; and to appoint whatever rites or ordinances were necessary for the establishment of his Church. There were many things which the apostles said, did, and decreed, for which they had no verbal instructions from our Lord, at least, none that are recorded in the Gospels; we may therefore conclude that these were suggested to them by that Holy Spirit which now became resident in them, and that it is to this that St. Luke refers in this verse, *After that he, through the Holy Ghost*, had given commandments unto the apostles.

**Verse 3. *To whom-he showed himself alive-by many infallible proofs***— **πολλοις τεκμηριοις**; by many proofs of such a nature, and connected with such circumstances, as to render them indubitable; for this is the import of the Greek word **τεκμηριον**. The proofs were such as these: 1. Appearing to several different persons at different times. 2. His eating and drinking with them. 3. His meeting them in Galilee according to his own appointment. 4. His subjecting his body to be touched and handled by them. 5. His instructing them in the nature and doctrines of his kingdom. 6. His appearing to upwards of five hundred persons at once, 1 Corinthians 15:6. And, 7. Continuing these public manifestations of himself for forty days.

The several appearances of Jesus Christ, during the forty days of his sojourning with his disciples, between his resurrection and ascension, are thus enumerated by Bishop Pearce: The first was to Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, Matthew 28:1-9. The second, to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, Luke 24:15. The third, to Simon Peter, Luke 24:34. The fourth, to ten of the apostles, Thomas being absent, Luke 24:36, and John 20:19. (All these four appearances took place on the day of his resurrection.) The fifth was to the eleven disciples, Thomas being then with them, John 20:26. The sixth, to seven of the apostles in Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, John 21:4. The seventh, to James, 1 Corinthians 15:7, most probably in Jerusalem, and when Jesus gave an order for all his apostles to assemble together, as in Acts 1:4. The eighth, when they were assembled together, and when he led them unto Bethany, Luke 24:50, from whence he ascended to heaven. But see the note on John 21:14, for farther particulars.

*Pertaining to the kingdom of God*— Whatever concerned the doctrine, discipline, and establishment of the Christian Church.

**Verse 4.** *And, being assembled together*— Instead of συναλιζομενος, being assembled together, several good MSS. and versions read συναυλιζομενος, living or eating together, which refers the conversation reported here to some particular time, when he sat at meat, with his disciples. See Mark 16:14: Luke 24:41-44. See the margin. But probably the common reading is to be preferred; and the meeting on a mountain of Galilee is what is here meant.

*The promise of the Father*— The HOLY SPIRIT, which indeed was the grand promise of the New Testament, as JESUS CHRIST was of the Old. And as Christ was the grand promise of the Old Testament, during the whole continuance of the old covenant; so is the Holy Ghost, during the whole continuance of the new. As every pious soul that believed in the coming Messiah, through the medium of the sacrifices offered up under the law, was made a partaker of the merit of his death, so every pious soul that believes in Christ crucified is made a partaker of the Holy Spirit. Thus, as the benefit of the death of Christ extended from the foundation of the world till his coming in the flesh, as well as after, so the inspiration of the Holy Spirit has been, and will be continued through the whole lapse of

time, till his coming again to judge the world. It is by this Spirit that sin is made known, and by it the blood of the covenant is applied; and indeed, without this, the want of salvation cannot be discovered, nor the value of the blood of the covenant duly estimated. How properly do we still pray, and how necessary is the prayer, “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.”  
Communion Service.

***Ye have heard of me.***— In his particular conversations with his disciples, such as those related John 14:16-26; 15:26; 16:7-15; to which passages, and the notes on them the reader is requested to refer: but it is likely that our Lord alludes more particularly to the conversation he had with them on one of the mountains of Galilee.

**Verse 5. *Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.***— This must refer to some conversation that is not distinctly related by the evangelists; as these identical words do not occur in any of the preceding histories. The Codex Bezae reads this passage thus: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, which ye shall receive not many days hence. John baptized with water, which was a sign of penitence, in reference to the remission of sin; but Christ baptizes with the Holy Ghost, for the destruction of sin, the illumination of the mind, and the consolation of the heart. John’s baptism was in reference to the spiritual kingdom; but Christ’s baptism established and maintained that kingdom. From this passage we may also learn that baptism does not always mean being plunged or immersed in water; for as this promise most evidently refers to the communication of the Holy Spirit on the following pentecost, and then he sat upon each as a cloven tongue of fire, this certainly has more affinity to sprinkling than to plunging. However, the mode of administering the sign is of very little consequence; and which is the best mode is exceedingly dubious: the stress should be laid on receiving the thing signified—the Holy Ghost, to illuminate, regenerate, refine, and purify the heart. With this, sprinkling or immersion are equally efficient: without this, both are worth nothing.



**Verse 6. *When they therefore were come together***— It is very likely that this is to be understood of their assembling on one of the mountains of Galilee, and there meeting our Lord.

***At this time restore again the kingdom***— That the disciples, in common with the Jews, expected the Messiah's kingdom to be at least in part secular, I have often had occasion to note. In this opinion they continued less or more till the day of pentecost; when the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit taught them the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ. The kingdom had now for a considerable time been taken away from Israel; the Romans, not the Israelites, had the government. The object of the disciples' question seems to have been this: to gain information, from their all-knowing Master, whether the time was now fully come, in which the Romans should be thrust out, and Israel made, as formerly, an independent kingdom. But though the verb **αποκαθιστανειν** signifies to reinstate, to renew, to restore to a former state or master, of which numerous examples occur in the best Greek writers, yet it has also another meaning, as Schoettgen has here remarked, viz. of ending, abolishing, blotting out: so Hesychius says, **αποκαταστασις** is the same as **τελειωσις**, finishing, making an end of a thing. And Hippocrates, Aph. vi. 49, uses it to signify the termination of a disease. On this interpretation the disciples may be supposed to ask, having recollected our Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the whole Jewish commonwealth, Lord, Wilt thou at this time destroy the Jewish commonwealth, which opposes thy truth, that thy kingdom may be set up over all the land? This interpretation agrees well with all the parts of our Lord's answer, and with all circumstances of the disciples, of time, and of place; but, still, the first is most probable.

**Verse 7. *The times or the seasons***— **χρονους η καιρους**. Times here may signify any large portion of a period, aera, or century—such as an Olympiad, lustrum or year; and seasons, the particular part, season, or opportunity in that period, etc., in which it might be proper to do any particular work. God has not only fixed the great periods in which he will bring about those great revolutions which his wisdom, justice, and mercy have designed, but he leaves himself at full liberty to choose those particular portions of such periods as may be best for the accomplishment of those purposes. Thus God is no necessary agent—every thing is put in

his own power, *εν τη ιδια εξουσια*, under his control and authority; nor will he form decrees of which he must become the necessary executor. The infinite liberty of acting or not acting, as wisdom, justice, and goodness shall see best, is essential to God, nor can there be a point in the whole of his eternity in which he must be the necessary agent of a fixed and unalterable fate. Infinite, eternal liberty to act or not to act, to create or not create, to destroy or not destroy, belongs to God alone, and we must take care how we imagine decrees, formed even by his own prescience, in reference to futurity, which his power is from the moment of their conception laid under the necessity of performing. In every point of time and eternity, God must be free to act or not to act, as may seem best to his godly wisdom.

**Verse 8. *But ye shall receive power***— *ληψεσθε δυναμιν*. Translating different terms of the original by the same English word is a source of misapprehension and error. We must not understand *δυναμις* which we translate power in this verse, as we do *εξουσια*, translated by the same word in the preceding verse. In the one, God's infinite authority over all times and seasons, and his uncompellable liberty of acting or not acting in any given case, are particularly pointed out: in the other, the energy communicated by him to his disciples, through which they were enabled to work miracles, is particularly intended; and *δυναμις*, in general, signifies such power, and is sometimes put for that of which it is the cause, viz. a miracle. See Matthew 7:22; 11:20-23; Matthew 13:54, 58; Mark 6:5; Luke 10:13; and Acts 2:22. The disciples were to be made instruments in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ; but this must be by the energy of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; nevertheless, this energy would be given in such times and seasons, and in such measures, as should appear best to the infinite wisdom of God. Christ does not immediately answer the question of the disciples, as it was a point savouring too much of mere curiosity; but he gave them such information as was calculated to bring both their faith and hope into action. St. Chrysostom has well observed, "that it is the prerogative of an instructor to teach his disciple, not what he wishes to learn, but what his master sees best for him:" *διδασκαλου τουτο εστι μη α βουλευται ο μαθητης, αλλ' α συμφερει μαθειν, διδασκειν*.

*Ye shall be witnesses-in all Judea*, etc.— Though the word earth,  $\eta \gamma \eta$ , is often used to denote Judea alone, yet here, it is probable, it is to be taken in its largest extent. All the inhabitants of the globe might at that period be considered divisible into three classes. 1. The JEWS, who adhered to the law of Moses, and the prophetic writings, worshipping the true God only, and keeping up the temple service, as prescribed in their law. 2. The SAMARITANS, a mongrel people, who worshipped the God of Israel in connection with other gods, 2 Kings 17:5, etc., and who had no kind of religious connection with the Jews. See on Matthew 10:5. And, 3. The GENTILES, the heathens through all other parts of the world, who were addicted to idolatry alone, and had no knowledge of the true God. By the terms in the text we may see the extent to which this commission of instruction and salvation was designed to reach: to the Jews; to the Samaritans, and the uttermost part of the earth, i.e. to the Gentile nations, thus, to the whole human race the Gospel of the kingdom was to be proclaimed. When the twelve disciples were sent out to preach, Matthew 10:5, their commission was very limited—they were not to go in the way of the Gentiles, nor enter into any city of the Samaritans, but preach the Gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: but here their commission is enlarged, for they are to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. See Matthew 28:18.

**Verse 9.** *He was taken up*— He was speaking face to face with them, and while they beheld he was taken up; he began to ascend to heaven, and they continued to look after him till a cloud received him out of their sight—till he had ascended above the region of the clouds, by the density of which all farther distinct vision was prevented. These circumstances are very remarkable, and should be carefully noted. They render insupportable the theory that states, “that our Lord did not ascend to heaven; that his being taken up signifies his going into some mountain, the top of which was covered with clouds, or thick vapours; and that the two men in white garments were two priests, or Levites, who simply informed the disciples of his revisiting them again at some future time.” One would suppose that an opinion of this kind could hardly ever obtain credit among people professing Christianity; and yet it is espoused by some men of considerable learning and ingenuity. But the mere letter of the text will be ever sufficient for its total confutation. He that believes the text cannot

receive such a miserable comment. Foreign critics and divines take a most sinful latitude on subjects of this kind.

**Verse 10. *Looked steadfastly***— Keeping their eyes intensely fixed on their ascending Lord; continuing to look even after he had ascended above the region of the inferior clouds.

***Two men stood by them***— Doubtless, angels in human shape.

***In white apparel***— As emblematical of their purity, happiness, and glory.

**Verse 11. *Gazing up into heaven***— Not to the top of a mountain, to which an unbridled fancy, influenced by infidelity, would intimate he had ascended, and not to heaven.

***This same Jesus***— Clothed in human nature. shall so come in like manner—with the same body, descending from heaven by his sovereign and all-controlling power, as ye have seen him go into heaven. Thus shall he come again to judge the quick and the dead. It was a very ancient opinion among Christians, that when Christ should come again to judge the world he would make his appearance on Mount Olivet. Some think that his coming again to destroy the Jewish nation is what the angels refer to. See a connected account of the different appearances of Christ at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 12. *A Sabbath day's journey***.— See the difficulties in this verse explained in the note on Luke 24:50. A Sabbath day's journey was seven furlongs and a half. Olivet was but five furlongs from Jerusalem; and Bethany was fifteen. The first region or tract of Mount Olivet, which was called Bethany, was distant from the city a Sabbath day's journey, or seven furlongs and a half; and the same distance did that tract called Bethphage extend from the city. When, therefore; our Lord came to the place where these two tracts touched each other, he there ascended, which place was distant from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey, as St. Luke here remarks. See the notes referred to above.

**Verse 13. *They went up into an upper room***— This was either a room in the temple, or in the house of one of the disciples, where this holy company was accustomed to meet. In Luke 24:53, it is said that, after their return from Mount Olivet, they were continually in the temple, praising

and blessing God: it is probable, therefore, that the upper room mentioned in this verse is that apartment of the temple mentioned above. But still it is not certain that this place should be so understood; as we have the fullest proofs that the upper rooms in private houses were used for the purpose of reading the law, and conferring together on religious matters. See several proofs in Lightfoot. Add to this, that the room here mentioned seems to have been the place where all the apostles lodged, **ου ησαν καταμενοντες**, and therefore most probably a private house.

**Verse 14. *These-continued-in prayer and supplication***— Waiting for the promise of the Father, according to the direction of our Lord, Luke 24:49. The words **και τη δεησει**, and in supplication, are omitted by ABC\*DE, both the Syriac, the Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, Itala, and some of the primitive fathers. On this evidence, Griesbach has left them out of the text; and others contend for the propriety of this omission, because, say they, **τη προσευχη** and **τη δεησει**, prayer and supplication, mean the same thing. Whether the reading be genuine or spurious, this inference is not just. Prayer may simply imply any address to God, in the way of petition or request; supplication, the earnest, affectionate, and continued application to God for the blessing requested from him by prayer. Prayer asks, supplication expostulates, entreats, urges and re-urges the petition.

***With the women***— Probably those who had been witnesses of his resurrection, with the immediate relatives of the apostles. Peter we know was married, Matthew 8:14, and so might others of the disciples; and therefore the wives of the apostles, as well as of other pious men, may be here intended.

**Verse 15. *In the midst of the disciples***— **μαθητων**; but instead of this, **αδελφων**, brethren, is the reading of ABC, a few others, with the Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate. This seems the best reading, because of what immediately follows; for it was not among the disciples merely that he stood, but among the whole company, which amounted to one hundred and twenty. It is remarkable that this was the number which the Jews required to form a council in any city; and it is likely that in reference to this the disciples had gathered together, with themselves, the number of one hundred and twenty, chosen out of the many who had been already converted by the ministry of our Lord, the twelve disciples, and the

seventy-two whom he had sent forth to preach, Luke 10:1, etc., thus they formed a complete council in presence of which the important business of electing a person in the place of Judas was to be transacted.

**Verse 16. *The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David***— Thus is a strong attestation to the Divine inspiration of the book of Psalms. They were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and spoken by the mouth of David.

**Verse 17. *Obtained part of this ministry***.— *ελαχε τον κληρον*, He obtained the lot of this ministry—not that he or any of the twelve apostles, was chosen to this ministry by lot, but as lot signifies the portion a man has in life, what comes to him in the course of the Divine providence, or as an especial gift of God's goodness, it is used here, as in many other parts of the sacred writings, to signify office or station. On this subject the reader is referred to the notes on Leviticus 16:8, 9; Joshua 14:2: see also Acts 1:26.

**Verse 18. *Purchased a field with the reward of iniquity***— Probably Judas did not purchase the field himself, but the money for which he sold his Lord was thus applied, see Matthew 27:6-8. It is possible, however, that he might have designed to purchase a field or piece of ground with this reward of his iniquity, and might have been in treaty for it, though he did not close the bargain, as his bringing the money to the treasury proves: the priests, knowing his intentions, might have completed the purchase, and, as Judas was now dead, applied the field thus bought for the burial of strangers, i.e. Jews from foreign parts, or others who, visiting Jerusalem, had died there. Though this case is possible, yet the passage will bear a very consistent interpretation without the assistance of this conjecture; for, in ordinary conversation, we often attribute to a man what is the consequence of his own actions, though such consequence was never designed nor wished for by himself: thus we say of a man embarking in a hazardous enterprise, he is gone to seek his death; of one whose conduct has been ruinous to his reputation, he has disgraced himself; of another who has suffered much in consequence of his crimes, he has purchased repentance at a high price, etc., etc. All these, though undesigned, were consequences of certain acts, as the buying of the field was the consequence of Judas's treason.

***And falling headlong, he burst asunder***— It is very likely that the 18th and 19th verses {Acts 1:18, 19} are not the words of Peter, but of the historian, St. Luke, and should be read in a parenthesis, and then the 17th and 20th verses {Acts 1:17, 20} will make a connected sense. (In the case of Judas, and the manner of his death, see the observations at the end of this chapter. {Acts 1:26})

**Verse 19. *It was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem***— The repentance of Judas, his dying testimony in behalf of our Lord's innocence, and his tragical death, were publicly known, as was also the transaction about the purchase of the field, and hence arose the name by which it was publicly known. These circumstances must have lessened the credit of the chief priests, and have prepared the public mind to receive the Gospel of the kingdom, when preached to them after the day of pentecost.

***That field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama***— This proper tongue was not the Hebrew; that had long ceased to be the proper tongue in Palestine: it was a sort of Chaldaio-Syriac which was commonly spoken. The word in the Syriac version is (Syriac) chacal-demo, and literally signifies the field of blood; because it was bought by the price of the life or blood of the Lord Jesus.

**Verse 20. *For it is written in the book of Psalms***— The places usually referred to are Psalm 69:25: Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents. And Psalm 109:8: Let his days be few, and let another take his office, פקדוּתוֹ pekudato, his overseership, his charge of visitation or superintendence, translated by the SEPTUAGINT, τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν, VULGATE, episcopatum; and WE, following both, bishopric, but not with sufficient propriety, for surely the office or charge of Judas was widely different from what we call bishopric, the diocess, estate, and emoluments of a bishop. ἐπισκοπος, episcopos, which was corrupted by our Saxon ancestors into (Anglo-Saxon), biscop, and by us into bishop, signifies literally an overseer or superintendent, from ἐπι, over, and σκεπτομαι, I see, a person who had the inspection, overseeing, or superintendence of others. The ancient ἐπισκοποι were persons who had the care of different congregations of the Church of Christ; who traveled, preached, enforced the discipline of the Church, and took care to prevent false doctrines, heresies, etc. Those who still deserve this title, and it is an august and

noble one, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing. **ἐπισκοπος**, episcopus, or bishop, is a scriptural and sacred title; was gloriously supported in the primitive Church; and many to the present day are not less ornaments to the title, than the title is ornamental to them. The best defenses of the truth of God, and the Protestant faith, are in the works of the bishops of the British Churches.

The words quoted from the Psalms were originally spoken against the enemies of David; and as David, in certain particulars, was a type of Christ, the words are applied to him in an especial manner who had sinned against his own soul and the life of his Master.

**Verse 21. *Which have companied with us***— They judged it necessary to fill up this blank in the apostolate by a person who had been an eye witness of the acts of our Lord.

***Went in and out***— A phrase which includes all the actions of life.

**Verse 22. *Beginning from the baptism of John***— From the time that Christ was baptized by John in Jordan; for it was at that time that his public ministry properly began.

***Must one be ordained***— This translation misleads every reader who cannot examine the original text. There is no term for ordained in the Greek: **γενεσθαι**, to be, is the only word in the verse to which this interpretation can be applied. The New Testament printed at London, by Robert Barker, the king's printer, in 1615, renders this and the preceding verse more faithfully and more clearly than our common version: Wherefore of these men who have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus was conversant among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day he was taken up from us, must one of them **BE MADE** a witness with us of his resurrection. The word ordained would naturally lead most readers to suppose that some ecclesiastical rite was used on the occasion, such as imposition of hands, etc., although nothing of the kind appears to have been employed.

**Verse 23. *They appointed two***— These two were probably of the number of the seventy disciples; and, in this respect, well fitted to fill up the place. It is likely that the disciples themselves were divided in opinion which of these two was the most proper person, and therefore laid the matter before



God, that he might decide it by the lot. No more than two candidates were presented; probably because the attention of the brethren had been drawn to those two alone, as having been most intimately acquainted with our Lord, or in being better qualified for the work than any of the rest; but they knew not which to prefer.

*Joseph called Barsabas*— Some MSS. read *Joses Barnabas*, making him the same with *Joses Barnabas*, Acts 4:36. But the person here is distinguished from the person there, by being called *Justus*.

**Verse 24.** *Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts*— *συ, κυριε, καρδιογνωστα*. The word *καρδιογνωστης*, the searcher of hearts, seems to be used here as an attribute of God; he knows the hearts, the most secret purposes, intentions, and dispositions of all men; and because he is the knower of hearts, he knew which of these men he had qualified the best, by natural and gracious dispositions and powers, for the important work to which one of them was now to be appointed.

**Verse 25.** *That he may take part of this ministry*, etc.— Instead of *τον κληρον*, the lot, which we translate *part*, *τον τοπον*, the place, is the reading of ABC\*, Coptic, Vulgate, and the Itala in the Codex Bezae, and from them the verse may be read thus, *That he may take the place of this ministry and apostleship*, (from which Judas fell) and go to his own place; but instead of *ιδιον*, own, the Codex Alexandrinus, and one of Matthai's MSS., read *δικαιον*, just-that he might go to his just or proper place.

This verse has been variously expounded: 1. Some suppose that the words, that he might go to his own place, are spoken of Judas, and his punishment in hell, which they say must be the own place of such a person as Judas.

2. Others refer them to the purchase of the field, made by the thirty pieces of silver for which he had sold our Lord. So he abandoned the ministry and apostolate, that he might go to his own place, viz. that which he had purchased.

3. Others, with more seeming propriety, state that his own place means his own house, or former occupation; he left this ministry and apostleship that he might resume his former employment in conjunction with his family, etc. This is primarily the meaning of it in Numbers 24:25: And

Balaam returned to HIS OWN PLACE, i.e. to his own country, friends, and employment.

4. Others think it simply means the state of the dead in general, independently of either rewards or punishments; as is probably meant by Ecclesiastes 3:20: All go unto ONE PLACE: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

But, 5. Some of the best critics assert that the words (as before hinted) belong to Matthias—his own place being the office to which he was about to be elected. Should any object, this could not be called his own place, because he was not yet appointed to it, but hell might be properly called Judas's own place, because, by treason and covetousness, he was fully prepared for that place of torment, it may be answered, that the own or proper place of a man is that for which he is eligible from being qualified for it, though he may not yet possess such a place: so St. Paul, Every man shall receive HIS OWN reward, **τον ιδιον μισθον**, called there his own, not from his having it already in possession, for that was not to take place until the resurrection of the just; but from his being qualified in this life for the state of glory in the other. See the observations at the end of the chapter. {Acts 1:26}

**Verse 26. *They gave forth their lots***— In what manner this or any other question was decided by lot, we cannot precisely say. The most simple form was to put two stones, pieces of board, metal, or slips of parchment, with the names of the persons inscribed on them, into an urn; and after prayer, sacrifice, etc., to put in the hand and draw out one of the lots, and then the case was decided. I have considered this subject at large on Leviticus 16:8, 9; and Joshua 14:2.

***He was numbered with the eleven apostles.***— The word **συγκατεψηφισθη**, comes from **συν**, together with, **κατα**, according to, and **ψηφος**, a pebble or small stone, used for lots, and as a means of enumeration among the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians; hence the words calculate, calculation, etc., from calculus, a small stone or pebble. From this use of the word, though it signifies in general to sum up, associate, etc., we may conjecture that the calculus or pebble was used on this occasion. The brethren agreed that the matter should be determined by lot; the lots were cast into the urn; God was entreated to direct the choice; one drew out a

lot; the person whose name was inscribed on it was thereby declared to be the object of God's choice, and accordingly associated with the disciples. But it is possible that the whole was decided by what we commonly call ballot, God inclining the hearts of the majority to ballot for Matthias. Nothing certain can, however, be stated on this head. Thus the number twelve was made up, that these might be the fountains under God of the whole Christian Church, as the twelve sons of Jacob had been of the Jewish Church. For it has already been remarked that our Lord formed his Church on the model of the Jewish. See the notes on John 17:1, etc. As the Holy Ghost, on the day of pentecost, was to descend upon them and endue them with power from on high, it was necessary that the number twelve should be filled up previously, that the newly elected person might also be made partaker of the heavenly gift. How long it was found necessary to keep up the number twelve, we are not informed: the original number was soon broken by persecution and death.

ON the death of Judas there is a great diversity of opinion among learned men and divines.

1. It is supposed, following the bare letter of the text, that Judas hanged himself, and that, the rope breaking, he fell down, was burst with the fall, and thus his bowels gushed out.
2. That, having hanged himself, he was thrown on the dunghill, and, the carcass becoming putrid, the abdomen, which soonest yields to putrefaction burst, and the bowels were thus shed from the body, and possibly torn out by dogs.
3. That, being filled with horror and despair, he went to the top of the house, or to some eminences and threw himself down; and thus, falling headlong, his body was broken by the fall, and his bowels gushed out.
4. That Satan, having entered into him, caught him up in the air, and thence precipitated him to the earth; and thus, his body being broken to pieces, his bowels gushed out. This is Dr. Lightfoot's opinion, and has been noticed on Matthew 27:5.
5. Others think that he died or was suffocated through excessive grief; and that thus the terms in the text, and in Matthew 27:5, are to be understood.

The late Mr. Wakefield defends this meaning with great learning and ingenuity.

6. Others suppose the expressions to be figurative: Judas having been highly exalted, in being an apostle, and even the purse-bearer to his Lord and brother disciples, by his treason forfeited this honor, and is represented as falling from a state of the highest dignity into the lowest infamy, and then dying through excessive grief. The Rev. John Jones, in his *Illustrations of the four Gospels*, sums up this opinion thus: "So sensible became the traitor of the distinguished rank which he forfeited, and of the deep disgrace into which he precipitated himself, by betraying his Master, that he was seized with such violent grief as occasioned the rupture of his bowels, and ended in suffocation and death." P. 571.

After the most mature consideration of this subject, on which I hesitated to form an opinion in the note on Matthew 27:5, I think the following observations may lead to a proper knowledge of the most probable state of the case. 1. Judas, like many others, thought that the kingdom of the Messiah would be a secular kingdom; and that his own secular interests must be promoted by his attachment to Christ. Of this mind all the disciples seem to have been, previously to the resurrection of Christ. 2. From long observation of his Master's conduct, he was now convinced that he intended to erect no such kingdom; and that consequently the expectations which he had built on the contrary supposition must be ultimately disappointed. 3. Being poor and covetous, and finding there was no likelihood of his profiting by being a disciple of Christ, he formed the resolution (probably at the instigation of the chief priests) of betraying him for a sum of money sufficient to purchase a small inheritance, on which he had already cast his eye. 4. Well knowing the uncontrollable power of his Master, he might take it for granted that, though betrayed, he would extricate himself from their hands; and that they would not be capable of putting him either to pain or death. 5. That having betrayed him, and finding that he did not exert his power to deliver himself out of the hands of the Jews, and seeing, from their implacable malice, that the murder of his most innocent Master was likely to be the consequence, he was struck with deep compunction at his own conduct, went to the chief priests, confessed his own profligacy, proclaimed the innocence of his Master, and returned the money for which he had betrayed him; probably

hoping that they might be thus influenced to proceed no farther in this unprincipled business, and immediately dismiss Christ. 8. Finding that this made no impression upon them, from their own words, What is that to us? See thou to that, and that they were determined to put Jesus to death, seized with horror at his crime and its consequences, the remorse and agitation of his mind produced a violent dysentery, attended with powerful inflammation; (which, in a great variety of cases, has been brought on by strong mental agitation;) and while the distressful irritation of his bowels obliged him to withdraw for relief, he was overwhelmed with grief and affliction, and, having fallen from the seat, his bowels were found to have gushed out, through the strong spasmodic affections with which the disease was accompanied. I have known cases of this kind, where the bowels appeared to come literally away by piece meal.

Now; when we consider that the word *απηξαστο*, Matthew 27:5, which we translate hanged himself, is by the very best critics thus rendered, was choked, and that the words of the sacred historian in this place, falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out, may be no other than a delicate mode of expressing the circumstance to which I have alluded under observation 6, perhaps this way of reconciling and explaining the evangelist and historian will appear, not only probable, but the most likely. To strengthen this interpretation, a few facts may be adduced of deaths brought about in the same way with that in which I suppose Judas to have perished. The death of Jehoram is thus related, 2 Chronicles 21:18, 19: And after all this, the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease: and it came to pass that, after the end of two years, HIS BOWELS FELL OUT, by reason of his sickness; so he died of sore diseases; *בתחל אים* bethachaluim, with inflammations, or ulcers. The death of Herod was probably of the same kind, Acts 12:23. That of Aristobulus, as described by Josephus, WAR, book i. chap. 3, is of a similar nature. Having murdered his mother and brother, his mind was greatly terrified, and his bowels being torn with excruciating torments, he voided much blood, and died in miserable agonies. Again, in his ANTIQ. book xv. chap. 10., sect. 3, he thus describes the death of Zenodorus: "His bowels bursting, and his strength exhausted by the loss of much blood, he died at Antioch in Syria."

Taking it for granted that the death of Judas was probably such as related above, collating all the facts and evidences together, can any hope be formed that he died within the reach of mercy? Let us review the whole of these transactions.

I. It must be allowed that his crime was one of the most inexcusable ever committed by man: nevertheless, it has some alleviations. 1. It is possible that he did not think his Master could be hurt by the Jews. 2. When he found that he did not use his power to extricate himself from their hands, he deeply relented that he had betrayed him. 3. He gave every evidence of the sincerity of his repentance, by going openly to the Jewish rulers: (1.) Confessing his own guilt; (2.) asserting the innocence of Christ; (3.) returning the money which he had received from them; and there (4.) the genuineness of his regret was proved by its being the cause of his death.

But, II. Judas might have acted a much worse part than he did: By persisting in his wickedness. 2. By slandering the character of our Lord both to the Jewish rulers and to the Romans; and, had he done so, his testimony would have been credited, and our Lord would then have been put to death as a malefactor, on the testimony of one of his own disciples; and thus the character of Christ and his Gospel must have suffered extremely in the sight of the world, and these very circumstances would have been pleaded against the authenticity of the Christian religion by every infidel in all succeeding ages. And, 3. Had he persisted in his evil way, he might have lighted such a flame of persecution against the infant cause of Christianity as must, without the intervention of God, have ended in its total destruction: now, he neither did, nor endeavored to do, any of these things. In other cases these would be powerful pleadings.

Judas was indisputably a bad man; but he might have been worse: we may plainly see that there were depths of wickedness to which he might have proceeded, and which were prevented by his repentance. Thus things appear to stand previously to his end. But is there any room for hope in his death? In answer to this it must be understood, 1. That there is presumptive evidence that he did not destroy himself; and, 2. That his repentance was sincere. If so, was it not possible for the mercy of God to extend even to his case? It did so to the murderers of the Son of God; and they were certainly worse men (strange as this assertion may appear) than

Judas. Even he gave them the fullest proof of Christ's innocence: their buying the field with the money Judas threw down was the full proof of it; and yet, with every convincing evidence before them, they crucified our Lord. They excited Judas to betray his Master, and crucified him when they had got him into their power; and therefore St. Stephen calls them both the betrayers and murderers of that Just One, Acts 7:52: in these respects they were more deeply criminal than Judas himself; yet even to those very betrayers and murderers Peter preaches repentance, with the promise of remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts 3:12-26. If, then, these were within the reach of mercy, and we are informed that a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith, Acts 6:7, then certainly Judas was not in such a state as precluded the possibility of his salvation. Surely the blood of the covenant could wash out even his stain, as it did that more deeply engrained one of the other betrayers and murderers of the Lord Jesus.

Should the 25th verse be urged against this possibility, because it is there said that Judas fell from his ministry and apostleship, that he might go to his own place, and that this place is hell; I answer, 1. It remains to be proved that this place means hell; and, 2. It is not clear that the words are spoken of Judas at all, but of Matthias: his own place meaning that vacancy in the apostolate to which he was then elected. See the note on Acts 1:25.

To say that the repentance of Judas was merely the effect of his horror; that it did not spring from compunction of heart; that it was legal, and not evangelical, etc., etc., is saying what none can with propriety say, but God himself, who searches the heart. What renders his case most desperate are the words of our Lord, Matthew 26:24: Wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born! I have considered this saying in a general point of view in my note on Matthew 26:24; and, were it not a proverbial form of speech among the Jews, to express the state of any flagrant transgressor, I should be led to apply it in all its literal import to the case of Judas, as I have done, in the above note, to the case of any damned soul; but when I find that it was a proverbial saying, and that it has been used in many cases where the fixing of the irreversible doom of a sinner is not implied, it may be capable of a more favorable interpretation than what is generally given to it. I shall

produce a few of those examples from Schoettgen, to which I have referred in my note on Matthew 26:24.

In CHAGIGAH, fol. ii. 2, it is said: "Whoever considers these four things, it would have been better for him had he never come into the world, viz. That which is above-that which is below-that which is before-and that which is behind; and whosoever does not attend to the honor of his Creator, it were better for him had he never been born."

In SHEMOTH RABBA, sect. 40, fol. 135, 1, 2, it is said: "Whosoever knows the law, and does not do it, it had been better for him had he never come into the world."

In VIYIKRA RABBA, sect. 36, fol. 179, 4, and MIDRASH COHELETH, fol. 91, 4, it is thus expressed: "It were better for him had he never been created; and it would have been better for him had he been strangled in the womb, and never have seen the light of this world."

In SOHAR GENES. fol. 71, col. 282, it is said: "If any man be parsimonious towards the poor, it had been better for him had he never come into the world." Ibid. fol. 84, col. 333: "If any performs the law, not for the sake of the law, it were good for that man had he never been created." These examples sufficiently prove that this was a common proverb, and is used with a great variety and latitude of meaning, and seems intended to show that the case of such and such persons was not only very deplorable, but extremely dangerous; but does not imply the positive impossibility either of their repentance or salvation.

The utmost that can be said for the case of Judas is this he committed a heinous act of sin and ingratitude; but he repented, and did what he could to undo his wicked act: he had committed the sin unto death, i.e. a sin that involves the death of the body; but who can say (if mercy was offered to Christ's murderers, and the Gospel was first to be preached at Jerusalem that these very murderers might have the first offer of salvation through him whom they had pierced) that the same mercy could not be extended to the wretched Judas? I contend that the chief priests, etc., who instigated Judas to deliver up his Master, and who crucified him-and who crucified him too as a malefactor-having at the same time the most indubitable evidence of his innocence, were worse men than Judas Iscariot himself; and



that, if mercy was extended to those, the wretched penitent traitor did not die out of the reach of the yearning of its bowels. And I contend, farther, that there is no positive evidence of the final damnation of Judas in the sacred text.

I hope it will not displease the humane reader that I have entered so deeply into the consideration of this most deplorable case. I would not set up knowingly any plea against the claims of justice; and God forbid that a sinner should be found capable of pleading against the cries of mercy in behalf of a fellow culprit! Daily, innumerable cases occur of persons who are betraying the cause of God, and selling, in effect, Christ and their souls for money. Every covetous man, who is living for this world alone, is of this stamp. And yet, while they live, we do not despair of their salvation, though they are continually repeating the sin of Judas, with all its guilt and punishment before their eyes! Reader! learn from thy Lord this lesson, Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. The case is before the Judge, and the Judge of all the earth will do right.

## CHAPTER 2.

*The day of pentecost being arrived, and the disciples assembled, the Holy Spirit descended as a mighty rushing wind, and in the likeness of fiery tongues sat upon them; in consequence of which, they were all enabled to speak different languages, which they had never learned, 1-4. An account of persons from various countries who there present, and were astonished to hear the apostles declare the wonderful works of God in their respective languages, 5-12. Some cavil, 13, and are confounded by Peter, who asserts that this work is of God; and that thereby a most important prophecy was fulfilled, 14-21. He takes occasion from this to preach Jesus to them, as the true Lord and only Messiah, 22-36. The people are alarmed and convinced, and inquire what they shall do, 37. He exhorts them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, that they may receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, 38-40. They gladly receive his word, about three thousand are baptized and added to the Church in one day; they continue steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, 41, 42. The apostles work many miracles; and the disciples have all things in common, and live in a state of great happiness and Christian fellowship, 43-47.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1.** *When the day of pentecost was fully come*— The feast of pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the passover, and has its name **πεντηκοστη** from **πεντηκοντα**, fifty, which is compounded of **πεντε**, five, and **ηκοντα**, the decimal termination. It commenced on the fiftieth day reckoned from the first day of unleavened bread, i.e. on the morrow after the paschal lamb was offered. The law relative to this feast is found in Leviticus 23:15, 16, in these words: And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days. This feast was instituted in commemoration of the giving the law on Mount Sinai;

and is therefore sometimes called by the Jews, שמחת תורה shimchath torah, the joy of the law, and frequently the feast of weeks. There is a correspondence between the giving of the law, which is celebrated by this feast of pentecost, together with the crucifixion of our Lord, which took place at the passover, and this descent of the Holy Spirit, which happened at this pentecost. 1. At the passover, the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian bondage: this was a type of the thralldom in which the human race were to Satan and sin. 2. At the passover Jesus Christ, who was typified by the paschal lamb, was sacrificed for the sin of the world, and by this sacrifice redemption from sin and Satan is now procured and proclaimed. 3. On the pentecost, God gave his law on Mount Sinai, accompanied with thunderings and lightnings. On the pentecost, God sent down his Holy Spirit, like a rushing mighty wind; and tongues of fire sat upon each disciple, in order that, by his influence, that new law of light and life might be promulgated and established. Thus, the analogy between the Egyptian bondage and the thralldom occasioned by sin—the deliverance from Egypt, and the redemption from sin—the giving of the law, with all its emblematic accompaniments, and the sending down the Holy Spirit, with its symbols of light, life, and power, has been exactly preserved. 4. At the Jewish passover, Christ was degraded, humbled, and ignominiously put to death: at the following festival, the pentecost, he was highly glorified; and the all conquering and ever during might of his kingdom then commenced. The Holy Spirit seems to have designed all these analogies, to show that, through all preceding ages, God had the dispensation of the Gospel continually in view; and that the old law and its ordinances were only designed as preparatives for the new.

*They were all with one accord in one place.*— It is probable that the ALL here mentioned means the one hundred and twenty spoken of Acts 1:15, who were all together at the election of Matthias. With one accord, **ομοθυμαδον**; this word is very expressive: it signifies that all their minds, affections, desires, and wishes, were centred in one object, every man having the same end in view; and, having but one desire, they had but one prayer to God, and every heart uttered it. There was no person uninterested—none unconcerned—none lukewarm; all were in earnest; and the Spirit of God came down to meet their united faith and prayer. When any

assembly of God's people meet in the same spirit they may expect every blessing they need.

In one place.—Where this place was we cannot tell: it was probably in the temple, as seems to be intimated in Acts 2:46, where it is said they were daily *ομοθυμαδον εν τω ιερω*, with one accord in the temple; and as this was the third hour of the day, Acts 2:15, which was the Jewish hour of morning prayer, as the ninth hour was the hour of evening prayer, Acts 3:1, it is most probable that the temple was the place in which they were assembled.

**Verse 2. *A sound from heaven***— Probably thunder is meant, which is the harbinger of the Divine presence.

***Rushing mighty wind***— The passage of a large portion of electrical fluid over that place would not only occasion the sound, or thunder, but also the rushing mighty wind; as the air would rush suddenly and strongly into the vacuum occasioned by the rarefaction of the atmosphere in that place, through the sudden passage of the electrical fluid; and the wind would follow the direction of the fire. There is a good deal of similarity between this account and that of the appearance of God to Elijah, 1 Kings 19:11, 12, where the strong wind, the earthquake, and the fire, were harbingers of the Almighty's presence, and prepared the heart of Elijah to hear the small still voice; so, this sound, and the mighty rushing wind, prepared the apostles to receive the influences and gifts of the Holy Spirit. In both cases, the sound, strong wind, and fire, although natural agents, were supernaturally employed. See the note on Acts 9:7.

**Verse 3. *Cloven tongues like as of fire***— The tongues were the emblem of the languages they were to speak. The cloven tongues pointed out the diversity of those languages; and the fire seemed to intimate that the whole would be a spiritual gift, and be the means of bringing light and life to the souls who should hear them preach the everlasting Gospel in those languages.

***Sat upon each of them.***— Scintillations, coruscations, or flashes of fire, were probably at first frequent through every part of the room where they were sitting; at last these flashes became defined, and a lambent flame, in the form of a cloven tongue, became stationary on the head of each

disciple; a proof that the Spirit of God had made each his temple or residence. That unusual appearances of fire were considered emblems of the presence and influence of God, both the Scriptures and the Jewish writings amply prove. Thus God manifested himself to Moses, when he appointed him to deliver Israel, Exodus 3:2, 3; and thus he manifested himself when he delivered the law on Mount Sinai, Exodus 19:16-20. The Jews, in order to support the pretensions of their rabbins, as delivering their instructions by Divine authority and influence, represent them as being surrounded with fire while they were delivering their lectures; and that their words, in consequence, penetrated and exhilarated the souls of their disciples. Some of the Mohammedans represent Divine inspiration in the same way. In a fine copy of a Persian work, entitled *Ajaceb al Makhlookat*, or *Wonders of Creation*, now before me, where a marred account of Abraham's sacrifice, mentioned Genesis 15:9-17, is given, instead of the burning lamp passing between the divided pieces of the victim, Genesis 15:17, Abraham is represented standing between four fowls, the cock, the peacock, the duck, and the crow, with his head almost wrapped in a flame of lambent fire, as the emblem of the Divine communication made to him of the future prosperity of his descendants. The painting in which this is represented is most exquisitely finished. This notion of the manner in which Divine intimations were given was not peculiar to the Jews and Arabians; it exists in all countries; and the glories which appear round the heads of Chinese, Hindoo, and Christian saints, real or supposed, were simply intended to signify that they had especial intercourse with God, and that his Spirit, under the emblem of fire, sat upon them and became resident in them. There are numerous proofs of this in several Chinese and Hindoo paintings in my possession; and how frequently this is to be met with in legends, missals, and in the ancient ecclesiastical books of the different Christian nations of Europe, every reader acquainted with ecclesiastical antiquity knows well. See the dedication of Solomon's temple, 2 Chronicles 7:1-3.

The Greek and Roman heathens had similar notions of the manner in which Divine communications were given: strong wind, loud and repeated peals of thunder, coruscations of lightning, and lambent flames resting on those who were objects of the Deities regard, are all employed by them to point out the mode in which their gods were reported to make their will known

to their votaries. Every thing of this kind was probably borrowed from the account given by Moses of the appearance on Mount Sinai; for traditions of this event were carried through almost every part of the habitable world, partly by the expelled Canaanites, partly by the Greek sages travelling through Asiatic countries in quest of philosophic truth: and partly by means of the Greek version of the Septuagint, made nearly three hundred years before the Christian aera.

“A flame of fire seen upon the head of any person was, among the heathens, considered as an omen from their gods that the person was under the peculiar care of a supernatural power, and destined to some extraordinary employment. Many proofs of this occur in the Roman poets and historians. Wetstein, in his note on this place, has made an extensive collection of them. I shall quote but one, which almost every reader of the *Aeneid* of Virgil will recollect: —

*Talia vociferans gemitu tectum omne replebat:  
Cum subitum, dictuque oritur mirabile monstrum.  
Namque manus inter, maestorumque ora parentum.  
Ecce levis summo de vertice visus Iuli  
Fundere lumen apex, tactuque innoxia molli  
Lambere flamma comas, et circum tempora pasci.  
Nos pavidi trepidare metu, crinemque flagrantem  
Excutere, et sanctos restinguere fontibus ignes.  
At pater Anchises oculos ad sidera laetus  
Extulit, et coelo palamas cum voce tetendit:  
Jupiter omnipotens —  
Da auxilium, pater, atque haec omina firma.*

VIRG. AEN. ii. v. 679.

*While thus she fills the house with clamorous cries,  
Our hearing is diverted by our eyes;  
For while I held my son, in the short space  
Betwixt our kisses and our last embrace,  
Strange to relate! from young Iulus' head, )  
A lambent flame arose, which gently spread >  
Around his brows, and on his temples fed. )  
Amazed, with running water, we prepare  
To quench the sacred fire, and slake his hair;  
But old Anchises, versed in omens, rear'd  
His hands to heaven, and this request preferr'd:  
If any vows almighty Jove can bend,  
Confirm the glad presage which thou art pleased to send.*

DRYDEN.

There is nothing in this poetic fiction which could be borrowed from our sacred volume; as Virgil died about twenty years before the birth of Christ.

It may be just necessary to observe, that tongue of fire may be a Hebraism: for in Isaiah 5:24, **לשון אש** *leshon esh*, which we render simply fire, is literally a tongue of fire, as the margin very properly has it. The Hebrews give the name of tongue to most things which terminate in a blunt point: so a bay is termed in Joshua 15:2, **לש** *lashon*, a tongue. And in Joshua 15:5, what appears to have been a promontory is called **לשון הים** *leshon hayam*, a tongue of the sea.

***It sat upon each***— That is, one of those tongues, like flames, sat upon the head of each disciple; and the continuance of the appearance, which is indicated by the word *sat*, shows that there could be no illusion in the case. I still think that in all this case the agent was natural, but supernaturally employed.

**Verse 4. *To speak with other tongues***— At the building of Babel the language of the people was confounded; and, in consequence of this, they became scattered over the face of the earth: at this foundation of the Christian Church, the gift of various languages was given to the apostles, that the scattered nations might be gathered; and united under one shepherd and superintendent (**ἐπισκοπος**) of all souls.

***As the Spirit gave them utterance.***— The word **αποφθεγγεσθαι** seems to imply such utterance as proceeded from immediate inspiration, and included oracular communications.

**Verse 5. *Devout men, out of every nation***— Either by these we are simply to understand Jews who were born in different countries, and had now come up to Jerusalem to be present at the passover, and for purposes of traffic, or proselytes to Judaism, who had come up for the same purpose: for I cannot suppose that the term **ανδρες ευλαβεις**, devout men, can be applied to any other. At this time there was scarcely a commercial nation under heaven where the Jews had not been scattered for the purpose of trade, merchandize, etc., and from all these nations, it is said, there were persons now present at Jerusalem.

**Verse 6. *When this was noised abroad***— If we suppose that there was a considerable peal of thunder, which followed the escape of a vast quantity of electric fluid, and produced the mighty rushing wind already noticed on Acts 2:2, then the whole city must have been alarmed; and, as various circumstances might direct their attention to the temple, having flocked thither they were farther astonished and confounded to hear the disciples of Christ addressing the mixed multitude in the languages of the different countries from which these people had come.

***Every man heard them speak in his own language***.— Use may naturally suppose that, as soon as any person presented himself to one of these disciples, he, the disciple, was immediately enabled to address him in his own language, however various this had been from the Jewish or Galilean dialects. If a Roman presented himself, the disciple was immediately enabled to address him in Latin—if a Grecian, in Greek—an Arab, in Arabic, and so of the rest.

**Verse 7. *Are not all these-Galileans?***— Persons who know no other dialect, save that of their own country. Persons wholly uneducated, and, consequently, naturally ignorant of those languages which they now speak so fluently.

**Verse 8. *How hear we every man in our own tongue***— Some have supposed from this that the miracle was not so much wrought on the disciples as on their hearers: imagining that, although the disciples spoke their own tongue, yet every man so understood what was spoken as if it had been spoken in the language in which he was born. Though this is by no means so likely as the opinion which states that the disciples themselves spoke all these different languages, yet the miracle is the same, howsoever it be taken; for it must require as much of the miraculous power of God to enable an Arab to understand a Galilean, as to enable a Galilean to speak Arabic. But that the gift of tongues was actually given to the apostles, we have the fullest proof; as we find particular ordinances laid down by those very apostles for the regulation of the exercise of this gift; see 1 Corinthians 14:1, etc.

**Verse 9. *Parthians***— Parthia anciently included the northern part of modern Persia: it was situated between the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf, rather to the eastward of both.



**Medes**— Media was a country lying in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea; having Parthia on the east, Assyria on the south, and Mesopotamia on the west.

**Elamites**— Probably inhabitants of that country now called Persia: both the Medes and Elamites were a neighboring people, dwelling beyond the Tigris.

**Mesopotamia**— Now Diarbec in Asiatic Turkey; situated between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates; having Assyria on the east, Arabia Deserta with Babylonia on the south, Syria on the west, and Armenia on the north. It was called Padan-aram by the ancient Hebrews, and by the Asiatics is now called Maverrannhar, i.e. the country beyond the river.

**Judea**— This word has exceedingly puzzled commentators and critics; and most suspect that it is not the true reading. Bishop Pearce supposes that **ιουδαιαν** is an adjective, agreeing with **μεσοποταμιαν**, and translates the passage thus: the dwellers in Jewish Mesopotamia. He vindicates this translation by showing that great numbers of the Jews were settled in this country: Josephus says that the ten tribes remained in this country till his time; that “there were countless myriads of them there, and that it was impossible to know their numbers.”—**μυριαδες απειροι, και αριθμω γνωσθηναι μη δυναμεναι**. See Ant. lib. xv. c. 2, s. 2, and c. 3, s. 1; Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. 1, 2. This interpretation, however ingenious, does not comport with the present Greek text. Some imagine that **ιουδαιαν** is not the original reading; and therefore they have corrected it into Syriam, SYRIA; Armeniam, ARMENIA; **ινδιαν**, INDIA; **λυδιαν**, LYDIA; **ιδουμαιαν**, IDUMEA; **βιθυνιαν**, BITHYNIA; and **κιλικιαν**, CILICIA: all these stand on very slender authority, as may be seen in Griesbach; and the last is a mere conjecture of Dr. Mangey. If Judea be still considered the genuine reading, we may account for it thus: the men who were speaking were known to be Galileans; now the Galilean dialect was certainly different from that spoken in Judea—the surprise was occasioned by a Jew being able to comprehend the speech of a Galilean, without any interpreter and without difficulty; and yet it is not easy to suppose that there was such a difference between the two dialects as to render these people wholly unintelligible to each other.

**CAPPADOCIA**— Was an ancient kingdom of Asia comprehending all that country that lies between Mount Taurus and the Euxine Sea.

**PONTUS**— Was anciently a very powerful kingdom of Asia, originally a part of Cappadocia; bounded on the east by Colchis; on the west by the river Halys; on the north by the Black Sea; and on the south by Armenia Minor. The famous Mithridates was king of this country; and it was one of the last which the Romans were able to subjugate.

**ASIA**— Meaning probably Asia Minor; it was that part of Turkey in Asia now called Natolia.

**Verse 10. PHRYGIA**— A country in Asia Minor, southward of Pontus.

**PAMPHYLIA**— The ancient name of the country of Natolia, now called Caramania, between Lycia and Cilicia, near the Mediterranean Sea.

**EGYPT**— A very extensive country of African bounded by the Mediterranean on the north; by the Red Sea and the Isthmus of Suez, which divide it from Arabia, on the east; by Abyssinia or Aethiopia on the south; and by the deserts of Barca and Nubia on the west. It was called Mizraim by the ancient Hebrews, and now Mesr by the Arabians. It extends 600 miles from north to south; and from 100 to 250 in breadth, from east to west.

**LIBYA**— In a general way, among the Greeks, signified Africa; but the northern part, in the vicinity of Cyrene, is here meant.

**CYRENE**— A country in Africa on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, southward of the most western point of the Island of Crete.

**Strangers of Rome**— Persons dwelling at Rome, and speaking the Latin language, partly consisting of regularly descended Jews and proselytes to the Jewish religion.

**Verse 11. Cretes**— Natives of Crete, a large and noted island in the Levant, or eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, now called Candia.

**Arabians**— Natives of Arabia, a well known country of Asia, having the Red Sea on the west; the Persian Gulf on the east; Judea on the north; and the Indian Ocean on the south.

*The wonderful works of God.*— Such as the incarnation of Christ; his various miracles, preaching, death, resurrection, and ascension; and the design of God to save the world through him. From this one circumstance we may learn that all the people enumerated above were either Jews or proselytes; and that there was probably none that could be, strictly speaking, called heathens among them. It may at first appear strange that there could be found Jews in so many different countries, some of which were very remote from the others; but there is a passage in Philo's Embassy to Caius which throws considerable light on the subject. In a letter sent to Caius by King Agrippa, he speaks of to the holy city of Jerusalem, not merely as the metropolis of Judea, but of many other regions, because of the colonies at different times led out of Judea, not only into neighboring countries, such as Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, and Coelosyria, but also into those that are remote, such as Pamphylia, Cilicia, and the chief parts of Asia as far as Bithynia, and the innermost parts of Pontus; also in the regions of Europe, Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, and the principal parts of Peloponnesus. Not only the continents and provinces (says he) are full of Jewish colonies, but the most celebrated isles also, Euboea, Cyprus, and Crete, not to mention the countries beyond the Euphrates. All these (a small part of Babylon and some other praefectures excepted, which possess fertile territories) are inhabited by Jews. Not only my native city entreats thy clemency, but other cities also, situated in different parts of the world, Asia, Europe, Africa; both islands, sea coasts, and inland countries.”  
 PHILONIS Opera, edit. Mangey, vol. ii. p. 587.

It is worthy of remark that almost all the places and provinces mentioned by St. Luke are mentioned also in this letter of King Agrippa. These, being all Jews or proselytes, could understand in some measure the wonderful works of God, of which mere heathens could have formed no conception. It was wisely ordered that the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost should take place at this time, when so many from various nations were present to bear witness to what was done, and to be themselves subjects of his mighty working. These, on their return to their respective countries, would naturally proclaim what things they saw and heard; and by this the way of the apostles was made plain; and thus Christianity made a rapid

progress over all those parts in a very short time after the resurrection of our Lord.

**Verse 13. *These men are full of new wine.***— Rather sweet wine, for *γλευκους*, cannot mean the mustum, or new wine, as there could be none in Judea so early as pentecost. The *γλευκος*, gleucus, seems to have been a peculiar kind of wine, and is thus described by Hesychius and Suidas: *γλευκος, το αποσταγμα της σταφυλης, πριν πατηθη*. Gleucus is that which distils from the grape before it is pressed. This must be at once both the strongest and sweetest wine. Calmet observes that the ancients had the secret of preserving wine sweet through the whole year, and were fond of taking morning draughts of it: to this Horace appears to refer, Sat. l. ii. s. iv. ver. 24.

*Aufidius forti miscebat mella Falerno.  
Mendose: quoniam vacuis committere venis  
Nil nisi lene decet: leni prae cordia mulso  
Prolueris melius.*

*Aufidius first, most injudicious, quaffed  
Strong wine and honey for his morning draught.  
With lenient bev'rage fill your empty veins,  
For lenient must will better cleanse the reins.*

FRANCIS.

**Verse 14. *Peter, standing up with the eleven***— They probably spoke by turns, not altogether; but Peter began the discourse.

***All ye that dwell at Jerusalem***— *οι κατοικουντες* would be better translated by the word sojourn, because these were not inhabitants of Judea, but the strangers mentioned in Acts 2:9-11, who had come up to the feast.

**Verse 15. *But the third hour of the day***— That is, about nine o'clock in the morning, previously to which the Jews scarcely ever ate or drank, for that hour was the hour of prayer. This custom appears to have been so common that even the most intemperate among the Jews were not known to transgress it; Peter therefore spoke with confidence when he said, these are not drunken—seeing it is but the third hour of the day, previously to which even the intemperate did not use wine.

**Verse 16. *Spoken by the prophet Joel***— The prophecy which he delivered so long ago is just now fulfilled; and this is another proof that Jesus whom ye have crucified is the Messiah.

**Verse 17. *In the last days***— The time of the Messiah; and so the phrase was understood among the Jews.

***I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh***— Rabbi Tanchum says, “When Moses laid his hands upon Joshua, the holy blessed God said, In the time of the old text, each individual prophet prophesied; but, in the times of the Messiah, all the Israelites shall be prophets.” And this they build on the prophecy quoted in this place by Peter.

***Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy***— The word prophesy is not to be understood here as implying the knowledge and discovery of future events; but signifies to teach and proclaim the great truths of God, especially those which concerned redemption by Jesus Christ.

***Your young men shall see visions***, etc.— These were two of the various ways in which God revealed himself under the Old Testament. Sometimes he revealed himself by a symbol, which was a sufficient proof of the Divine presence: fire was the most ordinary, as it was the most expressive, symbol. Thus he appeared to Moses on Mount Horeb, and afterwards at Sinai; to Abraham, Genesis 15:1-21; to Elijah, 1 Kings 19:11, 12. At other times he revealed himself by angelic ministry: this was frequent, especially in the days of the patriarchs, of which we find many instances in the book of Genesis.

By dreams he discovered his will in numerous instances: see the remarkable case of Joseph, Genesis 37:5, 9; of Jacob, Genesis 28:1, etc.; Genesis 46:2, etc.; of Pharaoh, Genesis 41:1-7; of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4:10-17. For the different ways in which God communicated the knowledge of his will to mankind, see the note on Genesis 15:1.

**Verse 18. *On my servants and on my handmaidens***— This properly means persons of the lowest condition, such as male and female slaves. As the Jews asserted that the spirit of prophecy never rested upon a poor man, these words are quoted to show that, under the Gospel dispensation, neither bond nor free, male nor female, is excluded from sharing in the gifts and graces of the Divine Spirit.

**Verse 19. *I will show wonders***— It is likely that both the prophet and the apostle refer to the calamities that fell upon the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the fearful signs and portents that preceded those calamities. See the notes on Matthew 24:5-7, where these are distinctly related.

***Blood, fire, and vapour of smoke***— Skirmishes and assassinations over the land, and wasting the country with fire and sword.

**Verse 20. *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood***— These are figurative representations of eclipses, intended most probably to point out the fall of the civil and ecclesiastical state in Judea: see the notes on Matthew 24:29. That the SUN is darkened when a total eclipse takes place, and that the MOON appears of a bloody hue in such circumstances, every person knows.

**Verse 21. *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved***.— The predicted ruin is now impending; and only such as receive the Gospel of the Son of God shall be saved. And that none but the Christians did escape, when God poured out these judgments, is well known; and that ALL the Christians did escape, not one of them perishing in these devastations, stands attested by the most respectable authority. See the note on Matthew 24:13.

**Verse 22. *A man approved of God***— *αποδεδειγμενον*, celebrated, famous. The sense of the verse seems to be this: Jesus of Nazareth, a man sent of God, and celebrated among you by miracles, wonders, and signs; and all these done in such profusion as had never been done by the best of your most accredited prophets. And these signs, etc., were such as demonstrated his Divine mission.

**Verse 23. *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel***— Bp. Pearce paraphrases the words thus: Him having been given forth; i.e. sent into the world, and manifested by being made flesh, and dwelling among you, as it is said in John 1:14; see also Acts 4:28.

Kypke contends that *εκδοτον*, delivered, does not refer to GOD, but to Judas the traitor “the Jews received Jesus, delivered up to them by Judas; the immutable counsel of God so permitting.”

By the determinate counsel, **ωρισμενη βουλη**; that counsel of God which defined the time, place, and circumstance, according (**προγνωσει**) to his foreknowledge, which always saw what was the most proper time and place for the manifestation and crucifixion of his Son; so that there was nothing casual in these things, God having determined that the salvation of a lost world should be brought about in this way; and neither the Jews nor Romans had any power here, but what was given to them from above. It was necessary to show the Jews that it was not through Christ's weakness or inability to defend himself that he was taken; nor was it through their malice merely that he was slain; for God had determined long before, from the foundation of the world, Revelation 13:8, to give his Son a sacrifice for sin; and the treachery of Judas, and the malice of the Jews were only the incidental means by which the great counsel of God was fulfilled: the counsel of God intending the sacrifice, but never ordering that it should be brought about by such wretched means. This was permitted; the other was decreed. See the observations at the end of this chapter. {Acts 2:47}

***By wicked hands have crucified and slain***— I think this refers to the Romans, and not to the Jews; the former being the agents, to execute the evil purposes of the latter. It is well known that the Jews acknowledged that they had no power to put our Lord to death, John 18:31, and it is as well known that the punishment of the cross was not a Jewish, but a Roman, punishment: hence we may infer that by **δια χειρων ανομων**, by the hands of the wicked, the Romans are meant, being called **ανομοι**, without law, because they had no revelation from God; whereas the others had what was emphatically termed **ο νομος του θεου**, the law of God, by which they professed to regulate their worship and their conduct. It was the Jews, therefore, who caused our Lord to be crucified by the hands of the heathen Romans.

**Verse 24. *Whom God hath raised up***— For, as God alone gave him up to death, so God alone raised him up from death.

***Having loosed the pains of death***— It is generally supposed that this expression means, the dissolving of those bonds or obligations by which those who enter into the region of the dead are detained there till the day of the resurrection; and this is supposed to be the meaning of **חבלי מות** *chebley maveth*, in Psalm 116:3, or **חבלי שאול** *chebley sheol*, in Psalm

18:5, and in 2 Samuel 22:6, to which, as a parallel, this place has been referred. But Kypke has sufficiently proved that **λυειν τας ωδινας θανατου**, signifies rather to REMOVE the pains or sufferings of death. So Lucian, Deuteronomy Conscr. Hist., says, “a copious sweat to some, **ελυσε τον πυρετον**, REMOVES or carries off the fever.” So STRABO, speaking of the balm of Jericho, says, **λυει δε κεφαλαλγιας θουμαστως**—it wonderfully REMOVES the headache, etc. That Christ did suffer the pains and sorrows of death in his passion is sufficiently evident; but that these were all removed, previously to his crucifixion, is fully seen in that calm manner in which he met it, with all its attendant terrors. If we take the words as commonly understood, they mean that it was impossible for the Prince of Life to be left in the empire of death: his resurrection, therefore, was a necessary consequence of his own Divine power.

Instead of **θανατου**, of death, the Codex Bezae, Syriac, Coptic, and Vulgate, have **ᾠιδου**, of hell, or the place of separate spirits; and perhaps it was on no better authority than this various reading, supported but by slender evidence, that, He descended into hell, became an article in what is called the apostles’ creed. And on this article many a popish legend has been builded, to the discredit of sober sense and true religion.

**Verse 25. *For David speaketh concerning him***— The quotation here is made from Psalm 16:8-11, which contains a most remarkable prophecy concerning Christ, every word of which applies to him, and to him exclusively. See the notes there.

**Verse 26. *And my tongue was glad***— In the Hebrew it is **ויגל כבודי** vaiyagel kebodi, “And my glory was glad:” but the evangelist follows the Septuagint, in reading **και ηγαλλιασατο η γλωσσα μου**, what all the other Greek interpreters in the Hexapla translate **δοξα μου**, my glory. And what is to be understood by glory here! Why the soul, certainly, and not the tongue; and so some of the best critics interpret the place.

**Verse 27. *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell***— **εις ᾠιδου**, in hades, that is, the state of separate spirits, or the state of the dead. Hades was a general term among the Greek writers, by which they expressed this state; and this HADES was Tartarus to the wicked, and Elysium to the good. See the explanation of the word in the note on Matthew 11:23.



**To see corruption.**— Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return, was a sentence pronounced on man after the fall: therefore this sentence could be executed on none but those who were fallen; but Jesus, being conceived without sin, neither partook of human corruption, nor was involved in the condemnation of fallen human nature; consequently, it was impossible for his body to see corruption; and it could not have undergone the temporary death, to which it was not naturally liable, had it not been for the purpose of making an atonement. It was therefore impossible that the human nature of our Lord could be subject to corruption: for though it was possible that the soul and it might be separated for a time, yet, as it had not sinned, it was not liable to dissolution; and its immortality was the necessary consequence of its being pure from transgression.

**Verse 28. *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life***— That is, the way from the region of death, or state of the dead and separate spirits; so that I shall resume the same body, and live the same kind of life, as I had before I gave up my life for the sin of the world.

**Verse 29. *Let me speak freely of the patriarch David***— In Midris Tillin, it is said, in a paraphrase on the words, my flesh shall rest in hope, “Neither worm nor insect had power over David.” It is possible that this opinion prevailed in the time of St. Peter, and, if so, his words are the more pointed and forcible; and therefore thus applied by Dr. Lightfoot: “That this passage, Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, etc., is not to be applied to David himself appears in that I may confidently aver concerning him, that he was dead and buried, and never rose again; but his soul was left εἰς ἄδου, in the state of the dead, and HE saw corruption; for his sepulchre is with us to this day, under that very notion, that it is the sepulchre of David, who died and was there buried; nor is there one syllable mentioned any where of the resurrection of his body, or the return of his soul εἰς ἄδου from the state of the dead.” To this the same author adds the following remarkable note: I cannot slip over that passage, Hieros. Chagig. fol. 78: Rab. Jose saith, David died at pentecost, and all Israel bewailed him, and offered their sacrifices the day following. This is a remarkable coincidence; and may be easily applied to him of whom David was a type.

**Verse 30. *According to the flesh, he would raise up Christ***— This whole clause is wanting in ACD, one of the Syriac, the Coptic, AEthiopic,

Armenian, and Vulgate; and is variously entered in others. Griesbach rejects it from the text, and Professor White says of the words, “certissime delenda,” they should doubtless be expunged. This is a gloss, says Schoettgen, that has crept into the text, which I prove thus: 1. The Syriac and Vulgate, the most ancient of the versions, have not these words. 2. The passage is consistent enough and intelligible without them. 3. They are superfluous, as the mind of the apostle concerning the resurrection of Christ follows immediately in the succeeding verse. The passage therefore, according to Bp. Pearce, should be read thus: Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath, of the fruit of his loins, to set on his throne; and foreseeing that he (God) would raise up Christ, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, etc. “In this transition, the words which Peter quotes for David’s are exactly the same with what we read in the psalm above mentioned; and the circumstance of David’s foreseeing that Christ was to be raised up, and was the person meant, is not represented as a part of the oath; but is only made to be Peter’s assertion, that David, as a prophet, did foresee it, and meant it.”

**Verse 31. *That his soul was not left in hell***— The words  $\eta \psi\upsilon\chi\eta \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ , his soul, are omitted by ABCD, Syriac, Coptic, AEthiopic, and Vulgate. Griesbach has left them out of the text, and Professor White says again, certissime delenda. The passage may be thus read: “He spake of the resurrection of Christ, that he was not left in hades, neither did his flesh see corruption.” For the various readings in this and the preceding verse, see Griesbach.

**Verse 32. *Whereof we all are witnesses***.— That is, the whole 120 saw him after he rose from the dead, and were all ready, in the face of persecution and death, to attest this great truth.

**Verse 33. *By the right hand of God exalted***— Raised by omnipotence to the highest dignity in the realms of glory, to sit at the right hand of God, and administer the laws of both worlds.

***The promise of the Holy Ghost***— This was the promise that he had made to them a little before he suffered, as may be seen in John 14:16, etc., John 16:7, etc., and after he had risen from the dead. Luke 24:49, and which as the apostle says was now shed forth.

**Verse 34. *David is not ascended***— Consequently, he has not sent forth this extraordinary gift, but it comes from his Lord, of whom he said, The Lord said unto my Lord, etc. See the note on these words, Matthew 22:44.

**Verse 35. *Until I make thy foes thy footstool***.— It was usual with conquerors to put their feet on the necks of vanquished leaders, as emblematical of the state of subjection to which they were reduced, and the total extinction of their power. By quoting these words, Peter shows the Jews, who continued enemies to Christ, that their discomfiture and ruin must necessarily take place, their own king and prophet having predicted this in connection with the other things which had already been so literally and circumstantially fulfilled. This conclusion had the desired effect, when pressed home with the strong application in the following verse.

**Verse 36. *Both Lord and Christ***.— Not only the Messiah, but the supreme Governor of all things and all persons, Jews and Gentiles, angels and men. In the preceding discourse, Peter assumes a fact which none would attempt to deny, viz. that Jesus had been lately crucified by them. He then, 1. Proves his resurrection. 2. His ascension. 3. His exaltation to the right hand of God. 4. The effusion of the Holy Spirit, which was the fruit of his glorification, and which had not only been promised by himself, but foretold by their own prophets: in consequence of which, 5. It was indisputably proved that this same Jesus, whom they had crucified, was the promised Messiah; and if so, 6. The Governor of the universe, from whose power and justice they had every thing to dread, as they refused to receive his proffered mercy and kindness.

**Verse 37. *When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart***— This powerful, intelligent, consecutive, and interesting discourse, supported every where by prophecies and corresponding facts, left them without reply and without excuse; and they plainly saw there was no hope for them, but in the mercy of him whom they had rejected and crucified.

***What shall we do?***— How shall we escape those judgments which we now see hanging over our heads?

**Verse 38. *Peter said unto them, Repent***— μετανοήσατε; Humble yourselves before God, and deeply deplore the sins you have committed;

pray earnestly for mercy, and deprecate the displeasure of incensed justice. For a definition of repentance, see on Matthew 3:2.

***And be baptized every one of you***— Take on you the public profession of the religion of Christ, by being baptized in his name; and thus acknowledge yourselves to be his disciples and servants.

***For the remission of sins***— **εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων**, In reference to the remission or removal of sins: baptism pointing out the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit; and it is in reference to that purification that it is administered, and should in consideration never be separated from it. For baptism itself purifies not the conscience; it only points out the grace by which this is to be done.

***Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.***— If ye faithfully use the sign, ye shall get the substance. Receive the baptism, in reference to the removal of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, by whose agency alone the efficacy of the blood of the covenant is applied, and by whose refining power the heart is purified. It was by being baptized in the name of Christ that men took upon themselves the profession of Christianity; and it was in consequence of this that the disciples of Christ were called CHRISTIANS.

**Verse 39. *For the promise is unto you***— Jews of the land of Judea: not only the fulfillment of the promise which he had lately recited from the prophecy of Joel was made to them, but in this promise was also included the purification from sin, with every gift and grace of the Holy Spirit.

***To all that are afar off***— To the Jews wherever dispersed, and to all the Gentile nations; for, though St. Peter had not as yet a formal knowledge of the calling of the Gentiles, yet, the Spirit of God, by which he spoke, had undoubtedly this in view; and therefore the words are added, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, i.e. all to whom, in the course of his providence and grace, he shall send the preaching of Christ crucified.

**Verse 40. *Save yourselves from this untoward generation.***— Separate yourselves from them: be ye saved, **σωθητε**: the power is present with you; make a proper use of it, and ye shall be delivered from their obstinate unbelief, and the punishment that awaits it in the destruction of them and their city by the Romans.

**Verse 41. *They that gladly received his word***— The word **ασμενωσ**, which signifies joyfully, readily, willingly, implies that they approved of the doctrine delivered; that they were glad to hear of this way of salvation; and that they began immediately to act according to its dictates. This last sense is well expressed in a similar phrase by Josephus: when speaking of the young Israelites enticing the Midianitish women to sin, by fair speeches, he says, **αι δε ασμενωσ δεξαμεναι τουσ λογουσ συνηεσαν αυτοις**, Ant. l. iv. c. 4. Then they who approved of their words consorted with them. The word is however omitted by ABCD, Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Vulgate, the Itala of the Codex Bezae, Clemens, and Chrysostom.

***Were baptized***— That is, in the name of Jesus, Acts 2:38, for this was the criterion of a Jew's conversion; and when a Jew had received baptism in this name he was excluded from all communication with his countrymen; and no man would have forfeited such privileges but on the fullest and clearest conviction. This baptism was a very powerful means to prevent their apostasy; they had, by receiving baptism in the name of Jesus, renounced Judaism, and all the political advantages connected with it; and they found it indispensably necessary to make the best use of that holy religion which they had received in its stead. Dr. Lightfoot has well remarked, that the Gentiles who received the Christian doctrine were baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; whereas the Jewish converts, for the reasons already given, were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

***Were added-three thousand souls.***— **προεεεεησαν**, They went over from one party to another. The Greek writers make use of this verb to signify that act by which cities, towns, or provinces changed their masters, and put themselves under another government. So these 3000 persons left the scribes and Pharisees, and put themselves under the teaching of the apostles, professing the Christian doctrine, and acknowledging that Christ was come, and that he who was lately crucified by the Jews was the promised and only Messiah; and in this faith they were baptized.

These 3000 were not converted under one discourse, nor in one place, nor by one person. All the apostles preached, some in one language, and some in another; and not in one house—for where was there one at that time that

could hold such a multitude of people? For, out of the multitudes that heard, 3000 were converted; and if one in five was converted it must have been a very large proportion. The truth seems to be this: All the apostles preached in different parts of the city, during the course of that day; and in that day, **τη ημερα εκεινη**, 3000 converts were the fruits of the conjoint exertions of these holy men. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that the account in this place is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 110:1, etc.: The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand; this refers to the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, Psalm 110:3. This was the day of his power; and while the apostles proclaimed his death, resurrection, and ascension, the people came willingly in, and embraced the doctrines of Christianity.

**Verse 42.** *They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine*— They received it, retained it, and acted on its principles.

*And fellowship*— **κοινωνια**, community; meaning association for religious and spiritual purposes, The community of goods cannot be meant; for this is mentioned Acts 2:44, 45, where it is said, they had all things common.

*And in breaking of bread*— Whether this means the holy eucharist, or their common meals, it is difficult to say. The Syriac understands it of the former. Breaking of bread was that act which preceded a feast or meal, and which was performed by the master of the house, when he pronounced the blessing—what we would call grace before meat. See the form on Matthew 26:26.

*And in prayers.*— In supplications to God for an increase of grace and life in their own souls; for establishment in the truth which they had received, and for the extension of the kingdom of Christ in the salvation of men. Behold the employment of the primitive and apostolic Church. 1. They were builded up on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the corner stone. 2. They continued steadfastly in that doctrine which they had so evidently received from God. They were separated from the world, and lived in a holy Christian fellowship, strengthening and building up each other in their most holy faith. 4. They were frequent in breaking bread; in remembrance that Jesus Christ died for them. 5. They continued in prayers; knowing that they could be no longer

faithful than while they were upheld by their God; and knowing also that they could not expect his grace to support them, unless they humbly and earnestly prayed for its continuance.

**Verse 43.** *And fear came upon every soul*— Different MSS. and versions read this clause thus, And GREAT fear and TREMBLING came upon every soul in JERUSALEM. For several weeks past they had a series of the most astonishing miracles wrought before their eyes; they were puzzled and confounded at the manner in which the apostles preached, who charged them home with the deliberate murder of Jesus Christ, and who attested, in the most positive manner, that he was risen from the dead, and that God had sent down that mighty effusion of the Spirit which they now witnessed as a proof of his resurrection and ascension, and that this very person whom they had crucified was appointed by God to be the Judge of quick and dead. They were in consequences stung with remorse, and were apprehensive of the judgments of God; and the wonders and signs continually wrought by the apostles were at once proofs of the celestial origin of their doctrine and mission, and of their own baseness, perfidy, and wickedness.

**Verse 44.** *And, all that believed*— *οι πιστευοντες*, The believers, i.e. those who conscientiously credited the doctrine concerning the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and had, in consequence, received redemption in his blood.

*Were together*— *επι το αυτο*. “These words signify either, in one time, Acts 3:1; or in one place, Acts 2:1; or in one thing. The last of these three senses seems to be the most proper here; for it is not probable that the believers, who were then 3000 in number, Acts 2:41, besides the 120 spoken of Acts 1:15, were used all to meet at one time, or in one place, in Jerusalem.” See Bp. Pearce.

*And had all things common*— Perhaps this has not been well understood. At all the public religious feasts in Jerusalem, there was a sort of community of goods. No man at such times hired houses or beds in Jerusalem; all were lent gratis by the owners: Yoma, fol. 12. Megill. fol. 26. The same may be well supposed of their ovens, cauldrons, tables, spits, and other utensils. Also, provisions of water were made for them at the public expense; Shekalim, cap. 9. See Lightfoot here. Therefore a sort of

community of goods was no strange thing at Jerusalem, at such times as these. It appears, however, that this community of goods was carried farther; for we are informed, Acts 2:45, that they sold their possessions and their goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need. But, this probably means that, as in consequence of this remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God; and their conversion, they were detained longer at Jerusalem than they had originally intended, they formed a kind of community for the time being, that none might suffer want on the present occasion; as no doubt the unbelieving Jews, who were mockers, Acts 2:13, would treat these new converts with the most marked disapprobation. That an absolute community of goods never obtained in the Church at Jerusalem, unless for a very short time, is evident from the apostolical precept, 1 Corinthians 16:1, etc., by which collections were ordered to be made for the poor; but, if there had been a community of goods in the Church, there could have been no ground for such recommendations as these, as there could have been no such distinction as rich and poor, if every one, on entering the Church, gave up all his goods to a common stock. Besides, while this sort of community lasted at Jerusalem, it does not appear to have been imperious upon any; persons might or might not thus dispose of their goods, as we learn from the case of Ananias, Acts 5:4. Nor does it appear that what was done at Jerusalem at this time obtained in any other branch of the Christian Church; and in this, and in the fifth chap., where it is mentioned, it is neither praised nor blamed. We may therefore safely infer, it was something that was done at this time, on this occasion, through some local necessity, which the circumstances of the infant Church at Jerusalem might render expedient for that place and on that occasion only.

**Verse 46.** *They, continuing daily with one accord in the temple*— They were present at all the times of public worship, and joined together in prayers and praises to God; for it is not to be supposed that they continued to offer any of the sacrifices prescribed by the law.

*Breaking bread from house to house*— This may signify, that select companies, who were contiguous to each other, frequently ate together at their respective lodgings on their return from public worship. But **κατ' οικον**, which we translate from house to house, is repeatedly used by the Greek writers for home, at home, (see margin,) for though they had all



things in common, each person lived at his own table. Breaking bread is used to express the act of taking their meals. The bread of the Jews was thin, hard, and dry, and was never cut with the knife as ours is, but was simply broken by the hand.

*With gladness and singleness of heart*— A true picture of genuine Christian fellowship. They ate their bread: they had no severe fasts; the Holy Spirit had done in their souls, by his refining influence, what others vainly expect from bodily austerities. It may be said also, that, if they had no severe fasts, they had no splendid feasts: all was moderation, and all was contentment. They were full of gladness, spiritual joy and happiness; and singleness of heart, every man worthy of the confidence of his neighbor; and all walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing.

**Verse 47. Praising God**— As the fountain whence they had derived all their spiritual and temporal blessings; seeing him in all things, and magnifying the work of his mercy.

*Having favor with all the people.*— Every honest, upright Jew would naturally esteem these for the simplicity, purity, and charity of their lives. The scandal of the cross had not yet commenced; for, though they had put Jesus Christ to death, they had not get entered into a systematic opposition to the doctrines he taught.

*And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.*— Though many approved of the life and manners of these primitive Christians, yet they did not become members of this holy Church; God permitting none to be added to it, but **τους σωζομενους**, those who were saved from their sins and prejudices. The Church of Christ was made up of saints; sinners were not permitted to incorporate themselves with it.

One MS. and the Armenian version, instead of **τους σωζομενους**, the saved, have **τοις σωζομενοις**, to them who were saved; reading the verse thus: And the Lord added daily to those who were saved. He united those who were daily converted under the preaching of the apostles to those who had already been converted. And thus every lost sheep that was found was brought to the flock, that, under the direction of the great Master Shepherd, they might go out and in, and find pasture. The words, to the Church, **τη εκκλησια**, are omitted by BC, Coptic, Sahidic,

Æthiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate; and several add the words **ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό**, at that time, (which begin the first verse of the next chapter) to the conclusion of this. My old MS. English Bible reads the verse thus: For so the Lord encresed hem that weren maad saaf, eche day, into the same thing. Nearly the same rendering as that in Wiclif. Our translation of **τοὺς σωζομένους**, such as should be saved is improper and insupportable. The original means simply and solely those who were then saved; those who were redeemed from their sins and baptized into the faith of Jesus Christ. The same as those whom St. Paul addressed, Ephesians 2:8: By grace ye are saved, **εἰστε σεσωσμένοι**; or, ye are those who have been saved by grace. So in Titus 3:5: According to his mercy he saved us, **εἰσωσεν ἡμᾶς**, by the washing of regeneration. And in 1 Corinthians 1:18, we have the words **τοῖς σωζομένοις**, them who are saved, to express those who had received the Christian faith; in opposition to **τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις**, to those who are lost, namely the Jews, who obstinately refused to receive salvation on the terms of the Gospel, the only way in which they could be saved; for it was by embracing the Gospel of Christ that they were put in a state of salvation; and, by the grace it imparted, actually saved from the power, guilt, and dominion of sin. See 1 Corinthians 15:2: I made known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached unto you, which ye have received, and in which ye stand; and BY WHICH YE ARE SAVED, **δι' οὗ καὶ σωξέσθε**. Our translation, which indeed existed long before our present authorized version, as may be seen in Cardmarden's Bible, 1566, Beck's Bible, 1549, and Tindall's Testament, printed by Will. Tylle, in 1548, is bad in itself; but it has been rendered worse by the comments put on it, viz. that those whom God adds to the Church shall necessarily and unavoidably be eternally saved; whereas no such thing is hinted by the original text, be the doctrine of the indefectibility of the saints true or false-which shall be examined in its proper place.

ON that awful subject, the foreknowledge of God, something has already been spoken: see Acts 2:23. Though it is a subject which no finite nature can comprehend, yet it is possible so to understand what relates to us in it as to avoid those rocks of presumption and despondency on which multitudes have been shipwrecked. The foreknowledge of God is never spoken of in reference to himself, but in reference to us: in him properly there is neither foreknowledge nor afterknowledge. Omniscience, or the

power to know all things, is an attribute of God, and exists in him as omnipotence, or the power to do all things. He can do whatsoever he will; and he does whatsoever is fit or proper to be done. God cannot have foreknowledge, strictly speaking, because this would suppose that there was something coming, in what we call futurity, which had not yet arrived at the presence of the Deity. Neither can he have any afterknowledge, strictly speaking, for this would suppose that something that had taken place, in what we call preterity, or past time, had now got beyond the presence of the Deity. As God exists in all that can be called eternity, so he is equally every where: nothing can be future to him, because he lives in all futurity; nothing can be past to him, because he equally exists in all past time; futurity and preterity are relative terms to us; but they can have no relation to that God who dwells in every point of eternity; with whom all that is past, and all that is present, and all that is future to man, exists in one infinite, indivisible, and eternal Now. As God's omnipotence implies his power to do all things, so God's omniscience implies his power to know all things; but we must take heed that we meddle not with the infinite free agency of this Eternal Being. Though God can do all things, he does not all things. Infinite judgment directs the operations of his power, so that though he can, yet he does not do all things, but only such things as are proper to be done. In what is called illimitable space, he can make millions of millions of systems; but he does not see proper to do this. He can destroy the solar system, but he does not do it: he can fashion and order, in endless variety, all the different beings which now exist, whether material, animal, or intellectual; but he does not do this, because he does not see it proper to be done. Therefore it does not follow that, because God can do all things, therefore he must do all things. God is omniscient, and can know all things; but does it follow from this that he must know all things? Is he not as free in the volitions of his wisdom, as he is in the volitions of his power? The contingent as absolute, or the absolute as contingent? God has ordained some things as absolutely certain; these he knows as absolutely certain. He has ordained other things as contingent; these he knows as contingent. It would be absurd to say that he foreknows a thing as only contingent which he has made absolutely certain. And it would be as absurd to say that he foreknows a thing to be absolutely certain which in his own eternal counsel he has made contingent. By absolutely certain, I mean a thing which must be, in that order, time, place,

and form in which Divine wisdom has ordained it to be; and that it can be no otherwise than this infinite counsel has ordained. By contingent, I mean such things as the infinite wisdom of God has thought proper to poise on the possibility of being or not being, leaving it to the will of intelligent beings to turn the scale. Or, contingencies are such possibilities, amid the succession of events, as the infinite wisdom of God has left to the will of intelligent beings to determine whether any such event shall take place or not. To deny this would involve the most palpable contradictions, and the most monstrous absurdities. If there be no such things as contingencies in the world, then every thing is fixed and determined by an unalterable decree and purpose of God; and not only all free agency is destroyed, but all agency of every kind, except that of the Creator himself; for on this ground God is the only operator, either in time or eternity: all created beings are only instruments, and do nothing but as impelled and acted upon by this almighty and sole Agent. Consequently, every act is his own; for if he have purposed them all as absolutely certain, having nothing contingent in them, then he has ordained them to be so; and if no contingency, then no free agency, and God alone is the sole actor. Hence the blasphemous, though, from the premises, fair conclusion, that God is the author of all the evil and sin that are in the world; and hence follows that absurdity, that, as God can do nothing that is wrong, **WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT**. Sin is no more sin; a vicious human action is no crime, if God have decreed it, and by his foreknowledge and will impelled the creature to act it. On this ground there can be no punishment for delinquencies; for if every thing be done as God has predetermined, and his determinations must necessarily be all right, then neither the instrument nor the agent has done wrong. Thus all vice and virtue, praise and blame, merit and demerit, guilt and innocence, are at once confounded, and all distinctions of this kind confounded with them. Now, allowing the doctrine of the contingency of human actions, (and it must be allowed in order to shun the above absurdities and blasphemies,) then we see every intelligent creature accountable for its own works, and for the use it makes of the power with which God has endued it; and, to grant all this consistently, we must also grant that God foresees nothing as absolutely and inevitably certain which he has made contingent; and, because he has designed it to be contingent, therefore he cannot know it as absolutely and inevitably certain. I conclude that God, although omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, to

know all that he can know; no more than he is obliged, because he is omnipotent, to do all that he can do.

How many, by confounding the self and free agency of God with a sort of continual impulsive necessity, have raised that necessity into an all-commanding and overruling energy, to which God himself is made subject! Very properly did Milton set his damned spirits about such work as this, and has made it a part of their endless punishment: —

*Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
In thoughts more elevate; and reasoned high  
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;  
Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,  
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.*

PARAD. LOST, b. ii. l. 557.

Among some exceptionable expressions, the following are also good thoughts on the free agency and fall of man: —

*— I made him just and right,  
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.  
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere  
Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,  
When only what they needs must do appeared,  
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?.  
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,  
Made passive, both had served NECESSITY,  
Not ME. —  
So without least impulse or shadow of fate,  
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,  
They trespass, authors to themselves in all  
Both what they judge, and what they choose, for so  
I formed them free, and free they must remain  
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change  
Their nature, and revoke the high decree  
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained  
Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall.*

*Ibid, b. iii. l. 98, 103, 120.*

I shall conclude these observations with a short extract from Mr. Bird's Conferences, where, in answer to the objection, "If many things fall out contingently, or as it were by accident, God's foreknowledge of them can be but contingent, dependent on man's free will," he observes: "It is one

thing to know that a thing will be done necessarily; and another, to know necessarily that a thing will be done. God doth necessarily foreknow all that will be done; but he doth not know that those things which shall be done voluntarily will be done necessarily: he knoweth that they will be done; but he knoweth withal that they might have fallen out otherwise, for aught he had ordered to the contrary. So likewise God knew that Adam would fall; and yet he knew that he would not fall necessarily, for it was possible for him not to have fallen. And as touching God's preordination going before his prescience as the cause of all events this would be to make God the author of all the sin in the world; his knowledge comprehending that as well as other things. God indeed foreknoweth all things, because they will be done; but things are not (therefore) done, because he foreknoweth them. It is impossible that any man, by his voluntary manner of working, should elude God's foresight; but then this foresight doth not necessitate the will, for this were to take it wholly away. For as the knowledge of things present imports no necessity on that which is done, so the foreknowledge of things future lays no necessity on that which shall be; because whosoever knows and sees things, he knows and sees them as they are, and not as they are not; so that God's knowledge doth not confound things, but reaches to all events, not only which come to pass, but as they come to pass, whether contingency or necessarily. As, for example, when you see a man walking upon the earth, and at the very same instant the sun shining in the heavens, do you not see the first as voluntary, and the second as natural? And though at the instant you see both done, there is a necessity that they be done, (or else you could not see them at all,) yet there was a necessity of one only before they were done, (namely, the sun's shining in the heavens,) but none at all of the other, (viz. the man's walking upon the earth.) The sun could not but shine, as being a natural agent; the man might not have walked, as being a voluntary one." This is a good argument; but I prefer that which states the knowledge of God to be absolutely free, without the contradictions which are mentioned above. "But you deny the omniscience of God."-No, no more than I deny his omnipotence, and you know I do not, though you have asserted the contrary. But take heed how you speak about this infinitely free agent: if you will contradict, take heed that you do not blaspheme. I ask some simple questions on the subject of God's knowledge and power: if you know these things better than your neighbor,

be thankful, be humble, and pray to God to give you amiable tempers; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. May he be merciful to thee and me!

## CHAPTER 3.

*Peter and John go to the temple at the hour of prayer, and heal a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, 1-8. The people are astonished, and the apostles inform them that it was not by their own power they had healed the man, but through the power of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, 9-16. Peter both excuses and reproves them, and exhorts them to repentance, 17-21. Shows that in Jesus Christ the prophecy of Moses was fulfilled; and that all the prophets testified of Jesus and his salvation, 22-24; and that, in him, the covenant made with Abraham is fulfilled; and that Christ came to bless them by turning them away from their iniquities, 25, 26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1. *Peter and John went up together***— The words *ἐπι το αὐτο*, which we translate together, and which are the first words in this chapter in the Greek text, we have already seen, Acts 2:47, are added by several MSS. and versions to the last verse of the preceding chapter. But they do not make so good a sense there as they do here; and should be translated, not together, which really makes no sense here, but at that time; intimating that this transaction occurred nearly about the same time that those took place which are mentioned at the close of the former chapter.

***At the hour of prayer***— This, as is immediately added, was the ninth hour, which answers, in a general way, to our three o'clock in the afternoon. The third hour, which was the other grand time of public prayer among the Jews, answered, in a general way, to our nine in the morning. See the note on Acts 2:15.

It appears that there were three hours of the day destined by the Jews to public prayer; perhaps they are referred to by David, Psalm 55:17: EVENING and MORNING, and at NOON, will I pray and cry aloud. There are three distinct times marked in the book of the Acts. The THIRD hour, Acts 2:15, answering, as we have already seen, to nearly our nine o'clock in the morning; the SIXTH hour, Acts 10:9, answering to about twelve with us;



and the NINTH hour, mentioned in this verse, and answering to our three in the afternoon.

The rabbins believed that Abraham instituted the time of morning prayer; Isaac, that at noon; and Jacob, that of the evening: for which they quote several scriptures, which have little reference to the subject in behalf of which they are produced. Others of the rabbins, particularly Tanchum, made a more natural division. Men should pray, 1. When the sun rises; 2. when the sun has gained the meridian; 3. when the sun has set, or passed just under the horizon. At each of these three times they required men to offer prayer to God; and I should be glad to know that every Christian in the universe observed the same rule: it is the most natural division of the day; and he who conscientiously observes these three stated times of prayer will infallibly grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Verse 2. *A-man lame from his mother's womb***— The case of this man must have been well known: 1. from the long standing of his infirmity: 2. from his being daily exposed in a place so public. It appears that he had no power to walk, and was what we term a cripple, for he was carried to the gate of the temple, and laid there in order to excite compassion. These circumstances are all marked by St. Luke, the more fully to show the greatness and incontestable nature of the miracle.

***The gate-which is called Beautiful***— There are different opinions concerning this gate. Josephus observes, Bell. Jud. lib. v. cap. 5, sect. 3, that the temple had nine gates, which were on every side covered with gold and silver; but there was one gate which was without the holy house, and was of Corinthian brass, and greatly excelled those which were only covered with gold and silver: *πολυ τη τιμη τας καταργυρους και περιχρυσους υπεραγουσα*. The magnitudes of the other gates were equal one to another; but that of the Corinthian gate, which opened on the east, over against the gate of the holy house itself, was much larger: *πεντηκοντα γαρ πηχων ουσα την αναστασιν, τεσσαρακοντα πηχεις τας θυρας ειχε, και τον κοσμον πολυτελεστερον, επι δαψιλες παχος αργυρου τε και χρυσου*. for its height was fifty cubits, and its doors were forty cubits, and it was adorned after a most costly manner, as having much richer and thicker plates of silver and gold upon them than upon the other. This last was probably the gate which is here called

Beautiful; because it was on the outside of the temple, to which there was an easy access, and because it was evidently the most costly, according to the account in Josephus; but it must be granted that the text of Josephus is by no means clear.

**Verse 4. *Look on us.***— He wished to excite and engage his attention that he might see what was done to produce his miraculous cure, and, it is likely, took this occasion to direct his faith to Jesus Christ. See note on Acts 3:16. Peter and John probably felt themselves suddenly drawn by the Holy Spirit to pronounce the healing name in behalf of this poor man.

**Verse 5. *Expecting to receive something of them.***— Because it was a constant custom for all who entered the temple to carry money with them to give to the treasury, or to the poor, or to both. It was on this ground that the friends of the lame man laid him at the gate of the temple, as this was the most likely place to receive alms.

**Verse 6. *Silver and gold have I none***— Though it was customary for all those who entered the temple to carry some money with them, for the purposes mentioned above, yet so poor were the apostles that their had nothing to give, either to the sacred treasury, or to the distressed. The popish writers are very dexterous at forming analogies between St. Peter and the pope; but it is worthy of note that they have not attempted any here. Even the judicious and generally liberal Calmet passes by this important saying of the person whom he believed to have been the first pope. Thomas Aquinas, surnamed the angelical doctor, who was highly esteemed by Pope Innocent IV., going one day into the pope's chamber, where they were reckoning large sums of money, the pope, addressing himself to Aquinas, said: "You see that the Church is no longer in an age in which she can say, Silver and gold have I none?" "It is true, holy father," replied the angelical doctor, "nor can she now say to the lame man, Rise up and walk!" This was a faithful testimony, and must have cut deep for the moment. One thing is very remarkable, that though the saints of this church can work no miracles while alive, they work many when dead; and it is the attestation of those post mortem miracles that leads to their canonization. Thomas a Becket, who did no good while he lived, is reported to have done much after his death. Many have visited his tomb, and, in days of yore, many were said to be healed of whatsoever disease

they had. The age is more enlightened, and the tomb of this reputed saint has lost all its power.

**Verse 7. *Immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength***— The suddenness of the cure was the proof of the miracle: his walking and leaping were the evidences of it.

**Verse 8. *Walking and leaping, and praising God.***— These actions are very naturally described. He walked, in obedience to the command of the apostle, rise up and walk: he leaped, to try the strength of his limbs and to be convinced of the reality of the cure: he praised God, as a testimony of the gratitude he felt for the cure he had received. Now was fulfilled, in the most literal manner, the words of the Prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 35:6: The lame man shall leap as a hart.

**Verse 9. *And all the people saw him***— The miracle was wrought in the most public manner, and in the most public place, and in a place where the best judgment could be formed of it; for, as it was a Divine operation, the priests, etc., were the most proper persons to judge of it; and under their notice it was now wrought.

**Verse 11. *Held Peter and John***— He felt the strongest affection for them, as the instruments by which the Divine influence was converted to his diseased body.

***In the porch that is called Solomon's***— On this portico see Bp. Pearce's note, inserted in this work, John 10:23.

**Verse 12. *As though by our own power***— **δυναμι**, Miraculous energy.

***Or holiness***— **η ευσεβεια**, Meaning religious attachment to the worship of God. Do not think that we have wrought this miracle by any power of our own; or that any supereminent piety in us should have induced God thus to honor us, by enabling us to work it. Instead of **ευσεβεια**, holiness, the Syriac of Erpen, Armenian, Vulgate, and some copies of the Itala, have **εξουσια**, power or authority; but the first appears to be the legitimate reading.

**Verse 13. *The God of Abraham***, etc.— This was wisely introduced, to show them that HE whom they called their God had acknowledged Jesus Christ for his Son, and wrought this miracle in his name; and, by thus

honouring Jesus whom they slew, he had charged home the guilt of that murder upon them.

**Denied him in the presence of Pilate**— *ἠρνήσασθε*, Ye have renounced him as your king, and denounced him to death as a malefactor, when Pilate, convinced of his perfect innocence, was determined, *κριναντος*, judged it proper and just, to let him go. Pilate wished to act according to justice; you acted contrary to justice and equity in all their forms.

**Verse 14. *Ye denied the HOLY ONE***— *τον αγιον*. A manifest reference to Psalm 16:10: Thou wilt not suffer thy HOLY ONE to see corruption; where the original word *יְיָיִח* Chasideyca, thy HOLY ONE, is translated by the Septuagint, *τον ὁσιον σου*, a word of the same import with that used by Peter.

**And desired a murderer**— Barabbas: the case must have been fresh in their own remembrance. Like cleaves to like, and begets its like: they were murderers themselves, and so Christ calls them, Matthew 22:7, and they preferred a murderer to the holy and righteous ONE of God.

**Verse 15. *And killed the Prince of life***— *τον αρχηγον της ζωης*, The author of this life: not only implying that all life proceeds from Jesus Christ as its source, but that the life-giving influence of that religion which they were now proclaiming came all through him. *αρχηγος* signifies a prime leader or author, a captain, from *αρχη*, the beginning, head, or chief; and *αγω*, I lead. In Hebrews 2:10, Christ is called *αρχηγος της σωτηριας*, the Captain of salvation. He teaches the doctrine of life and salvation, leads the way in which men should walk, and has purchased the eternal life and glory which are to be enjoyed at the end of the way. So the Jews preferred a son of death, a destroyer of life, to the Author and Procurer of life and immortality!

**Whereof we are witnesses.**— They had now wrought a most striking miracle in the name of Christ, and immediately proposed themselves as witnesses of his resurrection from the dead; the miracle which they had thus wrought being an unimpeachable proof of this resurrection.

**Verse 16. *And his name***— JESUS, the Savior: through faith in his name, as the Savior, and author of life, and all its concomitant blessings, such as health, etc. It is not quite clear whether the apostles refer to their own faith

in Jesus, or to the faith of the lame man. It is true Christ had promised that they should perform miracles in his name, Mark 16:17, 18. And that whatsoever they asked of the Father in his name, he would grant it, John 16:23. And they might have been led at this time to make request unto God to be enabled to work this miracle; and the faith they had in his unlimited power and unchangeable truth might have induced them to make this request. Or, the faith might have been that of the lame man; the apostles, in the time they desired him to look on them, might have taught him the necessity of believing in Christ in order to his healing; and the man's mind might have been prepared for this by the miracle of the gift of tongues, of which he must have heard; and heard that this mighty effusion of the Spirit had come in the name and through the power of Christ. However the faith may be understood, it was only the means to receive the blessing, which the apostles most positively attribute, not to their power or holiness, but to Jesus Christ alone. Faith always receives; never gives.

**Verse 17. *I wot***— οἶδα, I know. Wot is from the Anglo-Saxon, (Anglo-Saxon) to know; and hence wit, science or understanding.

***Through ignorance ye did it***— This is a very tender excuse for them; and one which seems to be necessary, in order to show them that their state was not utterly desperate; for if all that they did to Christ had been through absolute malice, (they well knowing who he was,) if any sin could be supposed to be unpardonable, it must have been theirs. Peter, foreseeing that they might be tempted thus to think, and consequently to despair of salvation, tells them that their offense was extenuated by their ignorance of the person they had tormented and crucified. And one must suppose that, had they been fully convinced that this Jesus was the only Messiah, they never would have crucified him; but they did not permit themselves to receive conviction on the subject.

**Verse 18. *But those things-he hath so fulfilled***.— Your ignorance and malice have been overruled by the sovereign wisdom and power of God, and have become the instruments of fulfilling the Divine purpose, that Christ must suffer, in order to make an atonement for the sin of the world. All the prophets had declared this; some of them in express terms, others indirectly and by symbols; but, as the whole Mosaic dispensation referred

to Christ, all that prophesied or ministered under it must have referred to him also.

**Verse 19. *Repent ye therefore***— Now that ye are convinced that this was the Messiah, let your minds be changed, and your hearts become contrite for the sins you have committed.

***And be converted***— *επιστρεψατε*, Turn to God through this Christ, deeply deploring your transgressions, and believing on his name; that your sins may be blotted out, which are not only recorded against you, but for which you are condemned by the justice of God; and the punishment due to them must be executed upon you, unless prevented by your repentance, and turning to him whom ye have pierced. The blotting out of sins may refer to the ceremony of the waters of jealousy, where the curse that was written in the book was to be blotted out with the bitter water. See the note on Numbers 5:23. Their sins were written down against them, and cried aloud for punishment; for they themselves had said, His blood be upon us, and upon our children, Matthew 27:25; and unless they took refuge in this sacrificial blood, and got their sins blotted out by it, they could not be saved.

***When the times of refreshing shall come***— Dr. Lightfoot contends, and so ought all, that *οπως αν ελθωσι καιροι αναψυξεως*, should be translated, THAT the times of refreshing MAY come. *αναψυξις*, signifies a breathing time, or respite, and may be here applied to the space that elapsed from this time till the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This was a time of respite, which God gave them to repent of their sins, and be converted to himself. Taking the word in the sense of refreshment in general, it may mean the whole reign of the kingdom of grace, and the blessings which God gives here below to all genuine believers, peace, love, joy, and communion with himself. See on Acts 3:21.

**Verse 20. *Which before was preached unto you***— Instead of *προκεκηρυγμενον*, before preached, ABCDE, fifty-three others, both the Syriac, all the Arabic, the Armenian, Chrysostom, and others, have *προκεχειρισμενον*, who was before designed, or appointed; and this is without doubt the true reading. Christ crucified was the person whom God had from the beginning appointed or designed for the Jewish people. It was not a triumphant Messiah which they were to expect; but one who

was to suffer and die. Jesus was this person; and by believing in him, as thus suffering and dying for their sins, he should be again sent, in the power of his Spirit, to justify and save them.

**Verse 21. *Whom the heaven must receive***— He has already appeared upon earth, and accomplished the end of his appearing; he has ascended unto heaven, to administer the concerns of his kingdom, and there he shall continue till he comes again to judge the quick and the dead.

***The times of restitution of all things***— The word **αποκαταστασις**, from **απο** which signifies from, and **καθιστανειν**, to establish or settle any thing, viz. in a good state; and, when **απο** is added to it, then this preposition implies that this good state, in which it is settled, was preceded by a bad one, from which the change is made to a good one. So in Acts 1:6, when the disciples said to Christ, Wilt thou at this time restore again (**αποκαθιστανεις**) the kingdom to Israel? they meant, as the Greek word implies, Wilt thou take the kingdom from the Romans, and give it back to the Jews? Now, as the word is here connected with, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, it must mean the accomplishment of all the prophecies and promises contained in the Old Testament relative to the kingdom of Christ upon earth; the whole reign of grace, from the ascension of our Lord till his coming again, for of all these things have the holy prophets spoken; and, as the grace of the Gospel was intended to destroy the reign of sin, its energetic influence is represented as restoring all things, destroying the bad state, and establishing the good—taking the kingdom out of the hands of sin and Satan, and putting it into those of righteousness and truth. This is done in every believing soul; all things are restored to their primitive order; and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps the heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God. The man loves God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself; and thus all the things of which the holy prophets have spoken since the world began, relative to the salvation of any soul, are accomplished in this case; and when such a work becomes universal, as the Scriptures seem to intimate that it will, then all things will be restored in the fullest sense of the term. As therefore the subject here referred to is that of which all the prophets from the beginning have spoken, (and the grand subject of all their declarations was Christ and his work among men,) therefore the words are to be applied to this, and no

other meaning. Jesus Christ comes to raise up man from a state of ruin, and restore to him the image of God, as he possessed it at the beginning.

*All his holy prophets*— **παντων**, all, is omitted by ABCD, some others, one Syriac, the Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate. Griesbach leaves it out of the text, and inserts the article **των**, which the Greek MSS. have, in the place of **παντων**. The text reads thus: Which he hath spoken by his holy prophets, etc.

*Since the world began*.— **απ' αιωνος**; as **αιων** signifies complete and ever-during existence or eternity, it is sometimes applied, by way of accommodation, to denote the whole course of any one period, such as the Mosaic dispensation. See the note on Genesis 21:33. It may therefore here refer to that state of things from the giving of the law; and as Moses is mentioned in the next verse, and none before him, it is probable that the phrase should be so understood here. But, if we apply it to the commencement of time, the sense is still good: Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these things; and indeed the birth, life, miracles, preaching sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, and reign of Jesus Christ, have been the only theme of all prophets and inspired men from the foundation of the world.

**Verse 22.** *Moses truly said unto the fathers*— On this subject the reader is requested to refer to the note at Deuteronomy 18:22. From this appeal to Moses it is evident that Peter wished them to understand that Jesus Christ was come, not as an ordinary prophet, to exhort to repentance and amendment, But as a legislator, who was to give them a new law, and whose commands and precepts they were to obey, on pain of endless destruction. Therefore they were to understand that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was that new law which should supersede the old.

**Verse 24.** *All the prophets from Samuel*— Dr. Lightfoot observes: “We have Moses and Samuel mentioned together in this place, as also Psalm 99:6, because there were few or no prophets between these two, 1 Samuel 3:1, and the apparition of angels having been more frequent; but, after the decease of Phineas, it is a question whether there was any oracle by Urim and Thummim, through the defect of prophecy in the high priests, till the times of Samuel. But then it revived in Abimelec, Abiather, etc.” The Jews have a saying, Hieros. Chagigah, fol. 77. **נביאים סמואל דב של** Samuel



was the chief of the prophets. Perhaps it was in reference to this that Peter said, All the prophets from Samuel, etc.

**Verse 25. *Ye are the children of the prophets***— This is the argumentum ad hominem: as ye are the children or disciples of the prophets, ye are bound to believe their predictions, and obey their precepts; and not only so, but ye are entitled to their promises. Your duty and your interest go hand in hand; and there is not a blessing contained in the covenant which was made with your fathers but belongs to you. Now, as this covenant respected the blessings of the Gospel, you must believe in Jesus Christ, in order to be put in possession of all those blessings.

**Verse 26. *Unto you first, God, having raised up***— As you are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant, the first offers of salvation belong to you, and God thus makes them to you. The great mission of Jesus Christ is directed first to you, that you may be saved from your sins. God designs to bless you, but it is by turning each of you away from his iniquities. The salvation promised in the covenant is a salvation from SIN, not from the Romans; and no man can have his sin blotted out who does not turn away from it.

1. We may learn from this that neither political nor ecclesiastical privileges can benefit the soul, merely considered in themselves: a man may have Abraham for his father, according to the flesh; and have Satan for his father, according to the spirit. A man may be a member of the visible Church of Christ, without any title to the Church triumphant. In short, if a man be not turned away from his iniquities, even the death of Christ profits him nothing. His name shall be called JESUS, for he shall SAVE his people FROM their SINS.

2. If Christ be the substance and sum of all that the prophets have written, is it not the duty and interest of every Christian, in reading the Scriptures, to search for the testimony they bear to this Christ, and the salvation procured by his death?

## CHAPTER 4.

*The priests And Sadducees are incensed at the apostles' teaching, and put them in prison, 1-3. The number of those who believed, 4. The rulers, elders, and scribes call the apostles before them, and question them concerning their authority to teach, 5-7. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, answers, and proclaims Jesus, 8-12. They are confounded at his discourse and the miracle wrought on the lame man, yet command them not to preach in the name of Jesus, 13-18. Peter and John refuse to obey, 19, 20. They are farther threatened and dismissed, 21, 22. They return to their own company, who all join in praise and prayer to God, 23-30. God answers, and fills them with the Holy Spirit, 31. The blessed state of the primitive disciples, 32-35. The case of Joses, who sells his estate, and brought the money to the common stock. 36. 37.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1. *The priests***— These persons had evidenced the most implacable enmity against Christ from the beginning.

***The captain of the temple***— See this office particularly explained in the note on Luke 22:4.

***The Sadducees***— Whose whole system was now in danger by the preaching of the resurrection of Christ; for they believed not in the immortality of the soul, nor in any future world. These made a common cause with the priests, etc., to suppress the evidence of Christ's resurrection, and silence the apostles.

**Verse 2. *Being grieved***— *διαπονουμενοι*, They were thoroughly fatigued with the continuance of this preaching; their minds suffered more labor, through vexation at the success of the apostles, than the bodies of the apostles did in their fatiguing exercise of preaching during the whole day.

**Verse 4. *The number-was about five thousand.***— That is, as I understand the passage, the one hundred and twenty which were converted before pentecost, the three thousand converted at pentecost, and one thousand eight hundred and eighty converted since the conversion of the three thousand; making in the whole five thousand, or  $\omega\sigma\epsilon\iota$  about that number: there might have been more or less; the historian does not fix the number absolutely. A goodly flock in one city, as the commencement of the Christian Church! Some think all the five thousand were converted on this day; but this is by no means likely.

**Verse 5. *Their rulers, and elders, and scribes***— Those with the high priest Annas formed the Sanhedrin, or grand council of the Jews.

**Verse 6. *Annas***— Though this man was not now actually in the office of high priest, yet he had possessed it for eleven years, bore the title all his life, and had the honor of seeing five of his sons fill that eminent place after him—an honor that never happened to any other person from the commencement of the Mosaic institution. He is the same who is called Ananus by Josephus, Ant. b. xx. c. 8.

***And Caiaphas***— He was son-in-law to Annas, John 18:13, was now high priest, and the same who, a short time before, condemned Christ to be crucified.

***And John***— Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, with great probability that this was Jochanan ben Zaccai, who was very famous at that time in the Jewish nation. Of him it is said in the Talmud, Jucas. fol. 60: “Rabbin Jochanan ben Zaccai the priest lived 120 years. He found favor in the eyes of Caesar, from whom he obtained Jafneh. When he died, the glory of wisdom ceased.” The following is a remarkable passage: Yoma, fol. 39: Forty years before the destruction of the city, (the very time of which St. Luke now treats,) when the gates of the temple flew open of their own accord, Rab. Jochanan ben Zaccai said, “O temple! temple! why dost thou disturb thyself? I know thy end, that thou shalt be destroyed, for so the Prophet Zachary hath spoken concerning thee: open thy doors, O Lebanon! that the fire may devour thy cedars.” See Lightfoot and Schoettgen.

***And Alexander***— This was probably Alexander Lysimachus, one of the richest Jews of his time, who made great presents to the temple, and was

highly esteemed by King Agrippa. See Calmet. He was brother to the famous Philo Judaeus, and father of Alexander Tiberius, who married Berenice, the daughter of Agrippa the elder, and was governor of Judea after Cuspius Fadus. See Josephus, Ant. 1. xix. c. 5, s. 1.

*Of the kindred of the high priest*— Or rather, as Bp. Pearce renders it, “of the race of the high priests, i.e. of the family out of which the high priests were chosen.” It may, however, comprehend those who belonged to the families of Annas and Caiaphas, and all who were connected with the sacerdotal family. Luke distinctly mentions all these, to show how formidable the enemies were against whom the infant Church of Christ had to contend.

**Verse 7. *By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?***— It seems that this council were convinced that the lame man was miraculously healed; but it is very likely that they believed the whole to be the effect of magic; and, as all intercourse with familiar spirits, and all spells, charms, etc., were unlawful, they probably hoped that, on the examination, this business would come out, and that then these disturbers of their peace would be put to death. Hence they inquired by what power, *εν ποια δυναμει*, by what supernatural energy; or in what name, by what mode of incantation; and who is the spirit you invoke, in order to do these things? False prophets, reputed witches, wizards, etc., were to be brought before the sanhedrin, to be by them judged, acquitted, or condemned, according to the evidence. Some think the words should be thus understood: Who gave you authority to teach publicly! This belongs to the sanhedrin. What, therefore, is your authority, and who is he who gave it to you?

**Verse 8. *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost***— Which guided him into all truth, and raised him far above the fear of man; placing him in a widely different state of mind to that in which he was found when, in the hall of Caiaphas, he denied his Master, through fear of a servant girl. But now was fulfilled the promise of Christ, Matthew 10:18-20; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake; but take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.

**Verse 9. *The good deed done***— *επι ευεργεσια*, The benefit he has received in being restored to perfect soundness.

**Verse 10. *By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth***— This was a very bold declaration in the presence of such an assembly; but he felt he stood on good ground. The cure of the lame man the day before was notorious; his long infirmity was well known; his person could be easily identified; and he was now standing before them whole and sound: they themselves therefore could judge whether the miracle was true or false. But the reality of it was not questioned, nor was there any difficulty about the instruments that were employed; the only question is, How have ye done this? and in whose name? Peter immediately answers, We have done it in the name of Jesus of Nazareth whom ye crucified, and whom God hath raised from the dead.

**Verse 11. *This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders***— By your rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, you have fulfilled one of your own prophecies, Psalm 118:22; and, as one part of this prophecy is now so literally fulfilled, ye may rest assured, so shall the other; and this rejected stone shall speedily become the head stone of the corner. See the note on Matthew 21:42.

**Verse 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other***— No kind of healing, whether for body or soul, can come through any but him who is called JESUS. The spirit of health resides in him; and from him alone its influences must be received.

***For there is none other name***— Not only no other person, but no name except that divinely appointed one, Matthew 1:21, by which salvation from sin can be expected—none given under heaven—no other means ever devised by God himself for the salvation of a lost world. All other means were only subordinate, and referred to him, and had their efficacy from him alone. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and no man ever came, or can come, to the Father but by him.

**Verse 13. *The boldness of Peter and John***— *την παρρησιαν*, The freedom and fluency with which they spoke; for they spoke now from the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, and their word was with power.

***That they were unlearned and ignorant men***— *αγραμματοι*, Persons without literature, not brought up in nor given to literary pursuits—and ignorant, *ιδιωται*, persons in private life, brought up in its occupations

alone. It does not mean ignorance in the common acceptance of the term; and our translation is very improper. In no sense of the word could any of the apostles be called ignorant men; for though their spiritual knowledge came all from heaven, yet in all other matters they seem to have been men of good, sound, strong, common sense.

***They took knowledge of them***— **επεγινωσκον** may imply that they got information, that they had been disciples of Christ, and probably they might have seen them in our Lord's company; for there can be little doubt that they had often seen our Lord teaching the multitudes, and these disciples attending him.

***That they had been with Jesus.***— Had they not had his teaching, the present company would soon have confounded them; but they spoke with so much power and authority that the whole sanhedrin was confounded. He who is taught in spiritual matters by Christ Jesus has a better gift than the tongue of the learned. He who is taught in the school of Christ will ever speak to the point, and intelligibly too; though his words may not have that polish with which they who prefer sound to sense are often carried away.

**Verse 14. *They could say nothing against it.***— They could not gainsay the apostolic doctrine, for that was supported by the miraculous fact before them. If the doctrine be false, the man cannot have been miraculously healed: if the man be miraculously healed, then the doctrine must be true that it is by the name of Jesus of Nazareth that he has been healed. But the man is incontestably healed; therefore the doctrine is true.

**Verse 16. *A notable miracle hath been done***— A miracle has been wrought, and this miracle is known, and acknowledged to be such; all Jerusalem knew that he was lame-lame from his birth, and that he had long begged at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and now all Jerusalem knew that he was healed; and there was no means by which such a self-evident fact could be disproved.

**Verse 17. *But that it spread no farther***— Not the news of the miraculous healing of the lame man, but the doctrine and influence which these men preach and exert. More than a thousand people had already professed faith in Christ in consequence of this miracle, (see Acts 4:4,) and if this teaching

should be permitted to go on, probably accompanied with similar miracles, they had reason to believe that all Jerusalem (themselves excepted, who had steeled their hearts against all good) should be converted to the religion of him whom they had lately crucified.

*Let us straitly threaten them*— *απειλη απειλησωμεθα*, Let us threaten them with threatening, a Hebraism, and a proof that St. Luke has translated the words of the council into Greek, just as they were spoken.

*That they speak to no man in this name.*— Nothing so ominous to them as the name of Christ crucified, because they themselves had been his crucifiers. On this account they could not bear to hear salvation preached to mankind through him of whom they had been the betrayers and murderers, and who was soon likely to have no enemies but themselves.

**Verse 18.** *Not to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus.*— Any other doctrine, and any other name, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites and infidels will bear, but the doctrine which is according to godliness, proclaiming salvation through the blood of Christ crucified, they will not bear. If their doctrine were not the truth of God it could not be so unpopular; there is such an enmity in human nature against all that is good and true, that whatever comes from God is generally rejected by wicked men.

**Verse 19.** *Whether it be right in the sight of God*— As if they had said: Worldly prudence and a consideration of our secular interests would undoubtedly induce us to obey you; but acting as before God, and following the dictates of eternal truth and justice, we dare not be silent. Can it be right to obey men contrary to the command and will of God? When he commands us to speak, dare we hold our tongue? We have received our authority from God through Christ, and feel fully persuaded of the truth by the Holy Spirit which now dwells in us; and we should be guilty of treason against God, were we on any consideration to suppress his testimony. Your own consciences testify that we should be sinners against our heavenly King, were we to act according to your orders; and the conclusion is, that we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.

**Verse 21. *When they had farther threatened them***—

*προσαπειλησαμενοι*, When they had added to their former threatenings, repeating the former menaces, and adding new penalties.

***Finding nothing how they might punish them***— Or, as the Codex Bezae reads, *μηευρισκοντες αιτιαν, πως κολασωνται*, not finding, a cause why they might punish them. This reading is supported by the Syriac and Arabic. Bp. Pearce says, “This is better sense and better Greek.”

***Because of the people***— The people saw the miracle, confessed the finger of God, believed on the Lord Jesus, and thus became converts to the Christian faith; and the converts were now so numerous that the sanhedrin was afraid to proceed to any extremities, lest an insurrection should be the consequence.

**Verse 22. *The man was above forty years old***— The disease was of long standing, and consequently the more inveterate; but all difficulties, small or great, yield equally to the sovereign power of God. It is as easy with God to convert a sinner of forty or four-score, as one of ten years old. But he who now refuses to obey the call of God has neither reason nor revelation to support himself even in the most distant hope that he shall get, in a future time, the salvation which he rejects in the present.

**Verse 23. *They went to their own company***— This was properly the first persecution that had been raised up against the Church since the resurrection of Christ; and as the rest of the disciples must have known that Peter and John had been cast into prison, and that they were to be examined before the sanhedrin, and knowing the evil disposition of the rulers toward their brethren, they doubtless made joint supplication to God for their safety. In this employment it is likely Peter and John found them on their return from the council, and repeated to them all their treatment, with the threats of the chief priests and elders.

**Verse 24. *Lord, thou art God***— *δεσποτα, συ ο θεος*, Thou God art the sovereign Lord. Thy rule is universal, and thy power unlimited; for thou hast the heaven and its glories, the earth and the sea, and their endlessly varied and numerous inhabitants, under thy direction and control.

**Verse 25. *By the mouth of thy servant David hast said***— Several add, but impertinently, *δια πνευματος αγιου*, by the Holy Spirit; but it is



sufficient that GOD has said it; and thus we find that David spoke by the inspiration of God; and that the second Psalm relates to Jesus Christ, and predicts the vain attempts made by Jewish and heathen powers to suppress Christianity.

**Verse 26. *Against the Lord and against his Christ.***— *κατα του χριστου αυτου* should be translated, against his ANOINTED, because it particularly agrees with *ον εχριστας*, whom thou hast ANOINTED, in the succeeding verse.

**Verse 27.** There is a parenthesis in this verse that is not sufficiently noticed: it should be read in connection with Acts 4:28, thus: For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, (for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done,) both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together.

It is evident that what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done was not that which Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, (Romans,) and the people of Israel had done and were doing; for, then, their rage and vain counsel would be such as God himself had determined should take place, which is both impious and absurd; but these gathered together to hinder what God had before determined that his Christ or Anointed should perform; and thus the passage is undoubtedly to be understood.

***Were gathered together***— *εν τη πολει ταυτη*, In this very city, are added by ABDE, and several others; all the Syriac, the Coptic, AETHiopic, Armenian, Slavonian, Vulgate, Itala, and several of the primitive fathers. This reading Griesbach has received into the text. This makes the words much more emphatic; in this thy own city, these different and in all other cases dissentient powers are leagued together against thine Anointed, and are determined to prevent the accomplishment of thy purpose.

**Verse 29. *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings***— It is not against us, but against thee, that they conspire: it is not to prevent the success of our preaching, but to bring to nought thy counsel: the whole of their enmity is against thee. Now, Lord, look upon it; consider this.

*And grant unto thy servants*— While we are endeavoring to fulfill thy counsels, and can do nothing without thee, sustain our courage, that we may proclaim thy truth with boldness and irresistible power.

**Verse 30.** *By stretching forth thine hand to heal*— Show that it is thy truth which we proclaim, and confirm it with miracles, and show how highly thou hast magnified thy Son Jesus, whom they have despised and crucified, by causing signs and wonders to be wrought in his name.

*Thy holy child Jesus.*— του αγιου παιδος σου should be translated, thy holy SERVANT, as in Acts 4:25. δαβιδ παιδος σου, thy servant David, not thy CHILD David: the word is the same in both places.

**Verse 31.** *The place was shaken*— This earthquake was an evidence of the presence of God, and a most direct answer to their prayer, as far as that prayer concerned themselves. The earthquake proclaimed the stretched-out arm of God, and showed them that resistance against his counsels and determinations must come to nought.

*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*— And, in consequence of this, they spake the word of God with boldness; a pointed answer to a second part of their request, Acts 4:29. A right prayer will always have a right and ready answer. Though these disciples had received the Holy Spirit on the day of pentecost, yet they were capable of larger communications; and what they had then received did not preclude the necessity of frequent supplies, on emergent occasions. Indeed, one communication of this Spirit always makes way and disposes for another. Neither apostle nor private Christian can subsist in the Divine life without frequent influences from on high. Had these disciples depended on their pentecostal grace, they might have sunk now under the terror and menaces of their combined and powerful foes. God gives grace for the time being, but no stock for futurity, because he will keep all his followers continually dependent on himself.

*With boldness.*— παντι τω θελοντι πιστευειν, To all who were willing to believe, is added by DE, two others, Augustin, Irenaeus, and Bede.

**Verse 32.** *The multitude of them that believed*— The whole 5000, mentioned Acts 4:4, and probably many others, who had been converted by the ministry of the other apostles since that time.

***Were of one heart and of one soul***— Were in a state of the most perfect friendship and affection. In all the 5000 there appeared to be but one heart and one soul; so perfectly did they agree in all their views, religious opinions, and holy affections. Some MSS. add, **και ουκ ην διακρισις εν αυτοις ουδεμια**, and there was no kind of difference or dissension among them. This remarkable reading is found in the Codex Bezae, another of great authority, E, two others, Ambrose, Bede, Cyprian, and Zeno. Diogenes Laertius relates of Aristotle, **ερωτηθεις, τι εστι φιλος**; being asked, What is a FRIEND? **εφη, μια ψυχη δυο σωμασιν ενοικουσα** answered, ONE soul dwelling in TWO bodies. This saying has been justly celebrated: but what would this wonderful philosopher have thought and said, had he seen these disciples of Jesus, and friends of mankind: one soul dwelling in 5000 bodies!

***They had all things common.***— See the notes on Acts 2:44, where this subject is examined. See below, Acts 4:34.

**Verse 33. *With great power gave the apostles witness***— This power they received from the Holy Spirit, who enabled them, **μεγαλη δυναμει**, with striking miracles, to give proof of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; for this is the point that was particularly to be proved: that he was slain and buried, all knew; that he rose again from the dead, many knew; but it was necessary to give such proofs as should convince and confound all. This preaching and these miracles demonstrated this Divine truth: Jesus died for your sins—he rose again for your justification; behold what God works in confirmation of these glorious truths; believe therefore in the Lord Jesus, and ye shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

***Great grace was upon them all.***— They all received much of the favor or grace of God; and they had much favor with all who feared God. In both these ways this clause may be understood; for **χαρις** means favor, whether that be evidenced by benevolence or beneficence, or by both. The favor of God is the benevolence of God; but his benevolence is never exerted without the exertions of his beneficence. Hence the grace or favor of God always implies a blessing or gift from the hand of his mercy and power. The favor or benevolence of men may exist without beneficence, because it may not be in their power to communicate any gift or benefit, though they are disposed to do it; or, 2dly. the persons who enjoy their

favor may not stand in need of any of their kind acts; but it is not so with God: his good will is ever accompanied by his good work; and every soul that is an object of his benevolence stands in the utmost need of the acts of his beneficence. Hence, as he loved the world, he gave his Son a ransom for all. All needed his help; and, because they all needed it, therefore all had it. And truly we may say of the whole human race, for whom the Son of God tasted death, that great grace was upon all; for ALL have been purchased by his sacrificial death. This by the way.

**Verse 34. *Neither was there any among them that lacked***— It was customary with the Jews to call the poor together, to eat of the sacrifices, but as the priests, etc., were incensed against Christ and Christianity, consequently the Christian poor could have no advantage of this kind; therefore, by making a common stock for the present necessity, the poor were supplied; so there was none among them that lacked. This provision therefore of the community of goods, which could be but temporary, was made both suitably and seasonably. See Bp. Pearce, and see the note on Acts 2:44.

**Verse 35. *Laid-down at the apostles' feet***— To show how cordially and entirely they parted with them. And they entrusted the management of the whole to those men to whom they found God had entrusted the gifts of his Holy Spirit, and the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven.

**Verse 36. *Joses***— Or, Joseph, as many excellent MSS. read; but who he was, farther than what is here said, we know not.

***Surnamed Barnabas***— Or, Barsabbas, according to the Coptic.

***The son of consolation***— υιος παρακλησεως; As παρακλησις signifies exhortation, as well as consolation, and is indeed distinguished from the latter, 1 Corinthians 14:3, the original name was probably בר נבא Bar naba, or בר נביא Bar nebia, which signifies the son of prophecy or exhortation; and this is certainly one sense which prophecy has in the New Testament; and in this way Barnabas distinguished himself among the apostles. See Acts 11:23. And Barnabas EXHORTED them all that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord.

*A Levite, and of the country of Cyprus*— Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, off Cilicia, and not very distant from the Jewish coast. The Jews were very numerous in that island: see Dion. Cas. lib. 68, 69. Though he was a Levite, he might have had land of his own by private purchase. The Levites, as a tribe, had no land in Israel; but the individuals certainly might make purchases any where in the country: but, as Barnabas was of Cyprus, his land probably lay there; and as it is likely that he was one of those strangers that came up to Jerusalem to the late feast, and was there converted, he might have sold his land in the island to some of his own countrymen who were at Jerusalem at this time; and so, being called to the work of the ministry, continued to associate with the apostles, travelling every where, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God. He was the constant companion of St. Paul, till the separation took place on account of John Mark, mentioned Acts 15:36-39.

It is worthy of remark that the two apostles of the Gentiles, though of Jewish extraction, were both born in Gentile countries; Paul in Cilicia, Barnabas in Cyprus: this gave them many advantages; served to remove prejudices from the heathens; and gave them no doubt much facility in the Greek tongue, without which they could have done but little in Asia Minor, nor in most parts of the Roman empire where they traveled. How admirably does God determine even the place of our birth, and the bounds of our habitation! When under the influence of the grace of Christ, every thing is turned to a man's advantage. The man whom he calls to his work he will take care to endue with every necessary qualification. And is it too much to say that God never did call a man to preach the Gospel whom he did not qualify in such a manner that both the workman and the work should appear to be of God?

Some have said that ignorance is the mother of devotion. Devotion and religion are both scandalized by the saying. Enlightened piety has ever been the most sincere, steady, and active. God makes those wise who turn unto him; and by experimental religion all the powers of the mind are greatly improved. Every genuine minister of Christ has an enlightened heart; and, to this, it is his duty to add a well-cultivated mind. Exodus quovis ligno Mercurius non fit: A blockhead never did, and never can, make a minister.



## CHAPTER 5.

*The hypocrisy of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, and their awful death, 1-11. The apostles work many miracles, and the Church of God is increased, 12-16. The high priest and the Sadducees, being incensed against the apostles, seize and put them in prison, 17, 18. The angel of God delivers them, and commands them to go to the temple, and proclaim the Gospel, 19, 20. The high priest, having gathered the council together in the morning, sends to the prison to have the apostles brought before him, 21. The officers return, and report that they found the prison shut, and the watch set, but that the men had got out, 22, 23. A messenger arrives in the meanwhile, and says that the apostles are preaching in the temple, 24, 25. The captain and officers go and bring them before the council, who expostulate with them, 26-28. The apostles defend themselves, and charge the council with the murder of Christ; and assert his resurrection from the dead and ascension to the right hand of God, 29-32. The council are confounded, and purpose to slay the apostles, 33. Gamaliel gives them seasonable and prudent advice, 34-39. The council agree to it, but, before they discharge the apostles, beat them, and command them not to teach in the name of Jesus, 40. They depart rejoicing in their persecution, and continue to preach Jesus Christ, 41, 42.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

**Verse 1.** *But a certain man named Ananias*— Of these unhappy people we have no farther account than what is recorded here. In reference to birth, connections, etc., their names are written in the dust. The import of his name, חַנַּנְיָהּ *chananiyah*, the grace or mercy of the Lord, agrees very ill with his conduct.

**Verse 2.** *Kept back part of the price*— Ananias and Sapphira were evidently persons who professed faith in Christ with the rest of the disciples. While all were making sacrifices for the present necessity, they came forward among the rest, pretending to bring all the money they had

got for a possession, **κτημα**, (of what kind we know not,) which they had sold. A part of this price, however, they kept back, not being willing to trust entirely to the bounty of Providence, as the others did; thinking probably, that, as the whole was their own, they had a right to do with it as they pleased. And so they had: they were under no necessity to sell their possession; but the act of selling it for the ostensible purpose of bringing it into the common stock, left them no farther control over it, nor property in it; and their pretense, that the money which they brought was the whole produce of the sale, was a direct lie in itself, and an attempt to deceive the Holy Spirit, under whose influence they pretended to act. This constituted the iniquity of their sin.

**Verse 3. *Why hath Satan filled thine heart***— The verb **πληροειν**, which we translate to fill, Kypke has showed by many examples to signify, to instigate, excite, impel, etc., and it was a common belief, as well among the heathens as among the Jews and Christians, that, when a man did evil, he was excited to it by the influence and malice of an evil spirit. It is strange that, by the general consent of mankind, sin against God has been ever considered so perfectly unnatural, and so evil in itself, that no man would commit it unless impelled to it by the agency of the devil. The words of St. Peter here prove that such an agency is not fictitious: if there had been no devil, as some wish and perhaps feel it their interest to believe, or if this devil had no influence on the souls of men, Peter, under the agency of the Holy Spirit, would not have expressed himself in this way; for, if the thing were not so, it would have been the most direct means to lead the disciples to form false opinions, or to confirm them in old and absurd prejudices.

***To lie to the Holy Ghost***— **νευσασθαι το πνευμα το ἁγιον**, To deceive the Holy Spirit. Every lie is told with the intention to deceive; and they wished to deceive the apostles, and, in effect, that Holy Spirit under whose influence they professed to act. Lying against the Holy Ghost is in the next verse said to be lying against God; therefore the Holy Ghost is GOD.

***To keep back part of the price***— **νοσφισασθαι απο της τιμης**. The verb **νοσφιζειν**, **νοσφιζεσθαι**, is used by the Greek writers to signify purloining part of the public money, speculation. The word is used here



with great propriety, as the money for which the estate was sold was public property; as it was for this purpose alone that the sale was made.

**Verse 4.** *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own?*— See the note on Acts 5:2, and see that also on Acts 2:44.

**Verse 5.** *Fell down, and gave up the ghost*— *πεσων εξεψυξε*, Falling down, he expired, breathed his last: “Gave up the ghost” is a very improper translation here. See the notes on Genesis 25:8, and on Matthew 27:50. Two things may be remarked here: 1. That the sin of this person was of no ordinary magnitude, else God would not have visited it with so signal a punishment. 2. That Peter must have had the power to discern the state of the heart, else he had not known the perfidy of Ananias. This power, commonly called the discernment of spirits, the apostles had as a particular gift, not probably always but at select times, when God saw it necessary for the good of his Church.

**Verse 6.** *The young men arose*— Some of the stout young men belonging to the disciples then present, who were the fittest to undertake a work of this kind, which required considerable bodily exertion.

*Buried him.*— This was on the same day in which he died. It was a clear case that he was dead, and dead by a judgment of God that would not be revoked. As therefore it was no case of suspended animation, there was no reason to delay the burial.

**Verse 9.** *To tempt the Spirit of the Lord?*— So the Holy Ghost, God, and the Spirit of the Lord, are the same person.

**Verse 10.** *Yielded up the ghost*— See Acts 5:5. It was not by Peter’s words, nor through Peter’s prayers, nor through shame, nor through remorse, that this guilty pair died, but by an immediate judgment of God. The question of the salvation of Ananias and Sapphira has not been a little agitated; and most seem inclined to hope that, though their sin was punished by this awful display of the Divine judgment, mercy was extended to their souls. For my own part, I think their sin was what the apostle, 1 John 5:16, calls a sin unto death; a sin which must be punished with temporal death, or the death of the body, while mercy was extended to the soul. It was right in this infant state of the Church to show God’s displeasure against deceit, fraud, and hypocrisy: had this guilty pair been

permitted to live after they had done this evil, this long-suffering would have been infallibly abused by others; and, instead of leading them who had sinned to repentance, might have led them to hardness of heart by causing them to presume on the mercy of God. That hypocrisy may be afraid to show her face, God makes these two an example of his justice; but, because they had not the ordinary respite, we may presume that God extended mercy to them, though cut off almost in the act of sin. Their case, however, cannot become a precedent, allowing them to have received mercy; because those who have seen in this case the severity of God must expect much sorer punishment, if, with such an example before their eyes, they should presume on the mercy of their Maker: this would be doing evil that good might come, and the perdition of such would be just.

**Verse 11. *Great fear came upon all the Church***— This judgment answered the end for which it was inflicted; a deeply religious fear occupied every mind, and hypocrisy and deception were banished from this holy assembly. On the word Church, see the observations at the end of Matt. 16. {Mt 16:28} It has been properly observed that we have in this place a native specimen of a New Testament Church: 1. Called by the Gospel; 2. grafted into Christ by baptism; 3. animated by love; 4. united by all kinds of fellowship; 5. and disciplined by the exemplary punishment of hypocrites. See Dodd.

**Verse 12. *By the hands of the apostles***— This verse should be read with the 15th, to which it properly belongs. {Acts 5:15}

***Solomon's porch.***— See the note on John 10:23.

**Verse 13. *And of the rest, durst no man join him self to them***— Who were these called the rest, *των λοιπων*? Dr. Lightfoot thinks the 120 are intended, of which he supposes Ananias to have been one; who, all seeing such wonders wrought by the apostles, were afraid to associate themselves with them in any way of equality, as they saw that God put peculiar honor upon them. Calmet more rationally observes, that the Jewish nation was then divided into many different sects, who entertained widely different opinions on various articles. The apostles adopted none of these jarring sentiments, and none of the different sects dared to join themselves to them; neither Pharisees, Sadducees, nor Herodians, as such, were found in this simple, holy Church. The people felt the force and power of the

apostles' doctrine, and magnified them, no more attending to the teaching of the others: the apostles taught them as men having authority, and not as the scribes and Pharisees. This irritated the high priest and his Sadducean council, and led them to adopt the measures mentioned below, Acts 5:17.

**Verse 14.** *And believers were the more added to the Lord*— Believers: 1. Those who credited the Divine mission of Christ. 2. That he was the Messiah. 3. That he died for their sins. 4. That he rose again. 5. That he ascended into heaven. 6. That he sent down the gift of the Holy Spirit. 7. That he ever appeared in the presence of God for them. 8. That it was he who gives repentance and remission of sins. And, 9. He by whom the world is to be judged. These were simple articles, of the truth of which they had the fullest evidence.

**Verse 15.** *Insomuch that they brought forth the sick*— This verse is a continuation of the subject begun in the 12th. {Acts 5:12} The following is the order in which all these verses should be read, from the 11th to the 15th. {Acts 5:11-15}

**Verse 11.** And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things.

**Verse 13.** And of the rest durst no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them:

**Verse 14.** And believers were the more added to the Lord, both men and women.

**Verse 12.** (last clause.) And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

**Verse 12.** (first clause.) And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;

**Verse 15.** Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, etc., etc.

How these different verses and clauses of verses, got so intermingled and confounded as they are now in our common text, I cannot tell; but the above will appear at once to be the natural order in which they should be placed.

*That-the shadow of Peter passing by*— I cannot see all the miraculous influence here that others profess to see. The people who had seen the miracles wrought by the apostles pressed with their sick to share the healing benefit: as there must have been many diseased people, it is not likely that the apostles, who generally addressed such persons, prayed and used imposition of hands, could reach all those that were brought to them, as fast as the solitude of their friends could wish. As, therefore, they could not get Peter or the other apostles, personally, to all their sick, they thought if they placed them on that side of the way where the shadow was projected, (the sun probably now declining, and consequently the shadow lengthening,) they should be healed by the shadow of the man passing over them, in whose person such miraculous powers were lodged. But it does not appear that the persons who thus thought and acted were of the number of those converts already made to the faith of Christ; nor does it appear that any person was healed in this way. The sacred penman simply relates the impression made on the people's minds; and how they acted in consequence of this impression. A popish writer, assuming that the shadow of Peter actually cured all on which it was projected, argues from this precarious principle in favor of the wonderful efficacy of relics! For, says he, "if the shadow of a saint can do so much, how much more may his bones, or any thing that was in contact with his person, perform!" Now, before this conclusion can be valid, it must be proved: 1. That the shadow of Peter did actually cure the sick; 2. That this was a virtue common to all the apostles; 3. That all eminent saints possess the same virtue; 4. That the bones, etc., of the dead, possess the same virtue with the shadow of the living; 5. That those whom they term saints were actually such; 6. That miracles of healing have been wrought by their relics; 7. That touching these relics as necessarily produces the miraculous healing as they suppose the shadow of Peter to have done. I think there is not sufficient evidence here that Peter's shadow healed any one, though the people thought it could; but, allowing that it did, no evidence can be drawn from this that any virtue is resident in the relics of reputed or real saints, by which miraculous influence may be conveyed. It was only in rare cases that God enabled even an apostle to work a miracle.

After the words, might overshadow some of them, the Vulgate adds, *et liberarentur ab infirmitatibus suis*; a Greek MS. (E) has nearly the same

words, **και ρυσθωσιν απο πασης ασθενειας ης ειχον**, and that they might be freed from all the infirmities which they had: a few other MSS. agree in the main with this reading.

**Verse 16. Sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits—**

Here it is evident that sick people are distinguished from those who were vexed with unclean spirits; and therefore they were not one and the same thing. The same distinction is made Matthew 4:24; 10:1; Mark 1:32, 34; 16:17, 18; and Luke 4:40, 41; 7:21.

**Verse 17. The high priest-and-the sect of the Sadducees—** **αιρεσις των σαδδουκαιων**,

The heresy of the Sadducees. In this place, as well as in several others, the word **αιρεσις**, heresy, has no evil meaning in itself; it is a word of distinction, and may receive either a good or bad colouring from the persons or opinions designated by it. It signifies a sect or party, whether good or bad, distinguished from any other sect. **αιρεσις**, heresy, comes from **αιρω**, I choose, and was anciently applied to the different sects of the heathen philosophers, the members of each sect having chosen their own in preference to all the others. It has been applied among ecclesiastical writers in the same way-when a man chooses one party of Christians, in preference to others, to be his companions in the way of salvation; and he chooses them and their creed and Christian discipline, because he believes the whole to be more consistent with the oracles of God than any of the rest. The Church of Rome has thought proper to attach a very bad meaning to this innocent word, and then apply it to all those who can neither credit her transubstantiation, depend on her purgatory, nor worship her relics. A heretic, in her acceptation, is one who is not a papist, and, because not a papist, utterly out of the way and out of the possibility of being saved. These persons should recollect that, by a then persecuting brother, St. Paul, all the apostles, and the whole Church of Christ, were termed **ναζωραιων αιρεσις**, the heresy of the Nazarenes, Acts 24:5; and it was after the way which the persecuting Jews called heresy that St. Paul and the rest of the apostles worshipped the God of their fathers, Acts 24:14; and it was according to the strictest HERESY in the Jewish Church, **ακριβεστατην αιρεσιν**, that St. Paul lived before his conversion, Acts 26:5; and we find, from Acts 28:22, that the whole Church of Christ was termed this heresy, **ταυτης αιρεσεως**, and this by persons who intended no reproach, but wished simply to distinguish the

Christians from scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, etc. Heresy therefore, in its first acceptation, signifies simply a choice: afterwards it was applied to designate all those persons who made the same choice; and hence the word sect and it became synonymous: in process of time it was applied to those professing Christianity who made, in some cases, a different choice as to some article of faith, or form of worship, from those which had obtained in that part of the Church with which they had been before connected. The majority, from whom they became thus separated, spoke evil of them, and treated them ill, because they presumed to choose for themselves on the foundation of the Holy Scriptures; and because they would take nothing for the truth of God that was not accredited from heaven. Thus, when the people now called Protestants, began to examine their creed according to the Holy Scriptures, and, in consequence of this examination, left out auricular confession, indulgences, the priests' power to forgive sins, adoration of saints, angels, and relics, purgatory, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, because they could not find them in the word of God, the papists called them heretics, by which they meant, in opposition to the meaning of the word, persons holding damnable errors; and, as such, they persecuted, burnt, and destroyed them wherever they had power. Now be it known to these persecutors, that the Protestants still choose to reject opinions and practices which they know to be unscriptural, absurd, and superstitious; and which they have a thousand times demonstrated to be such: and, on this ground, may they still be HERETICS!

*Were filled with indignation.*— ζηλου, With zeal. ζηλος, from ζεω, to be hot, and λα or λιαν, very much, signifies a vehement affection or disposition of the mind, which, according to its object, is either good or bad, laudable or blamable. Its meaning in this place is easily discerned; and not improperly translated indignation, in our version. We need not be surprised that the Sadducees were filled with indignation, because the apostles proclaimed the resurrection of Christ, and, through that, the general resurrection, which was diametrically opposed to their doctrine; for they denied the possibility of a resurrection, and believed not in the being of either angel or spirit; nor did they allow of the existence of a spiritual world. See on Acts 4:2.

**Verse 18.** *Put them in the common prison.*— It being too late in the evening to bring them to a hearing. To this verse the Codex Bezae adds,

και επορευθη εις εκαστος εις τα ιδια, And each of them went to his own house.

**Verse 19. *But the angel of the Lord-opened the prison doors***— This was done: 1. To increase the confidence of the apostles, by showing them that they were under the continual care of God; and, To show the Jewish rulers that they were fighting against Him while persecuting his followers, and attempting to prevent them from preaching the Gospel. This was another warning graciously given them by a good and merciful God, that they might repent, and so escape the coming wrath.

**Verse 20. *All the words of this life***.— All the doctrines of life eternal, founded on the word, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus. This is another periphrasis for Gospel. Go to the temple-the most public place, and speak to the people-who come there to worship according to the law, the words of this life-the whole doctrine of salvation from sin and death; and show that the law is fulfilled in the sacrifice of Jesus, and that, by his resurrection, he has brought life and immortality to light.

**Verse 21. *Called the council together***— συνεδριον The sanhedrin, all the senate; την γερουσιαν, the elders, or what we would call the aldermen. How these differed from the πρεσβυτεριον, presbytery, if they did differ, is not now known.

**Verse 23. *The prison truly found we shut***— All the doors were properly bolted, and the keepers at their post; but when we had opened, for it appears they were alone in possession of the keys; how much must this have increased their astonishment when they found that the doors were not broken open, the guards properly posted, and every thing as they left it, for they themselves had put the apostles in prison; but, when they had opened, there was no man within!

**Verse 24. *They doubted of them whereunto this would grow***.— They did not know what to think of the apostles, whether they had saved themselves by magic, or whether they were delivered by a real miracle; and they were at a loss to tell what the issue of these things would be.

**Verse 25. *Then came one and told them***— While they were in the perplexity mentioned above, a messenger surprised them with the

information that the very men whom they had imprisoned the preceding night were standing in the temple and teaching the people!

**Verse 26. *Brought them without violence***— On receiving the information mentioned above, proper officers were sent to seize and bring them before the council. The officers, on reaching the temple, found the multitude gladly receiving the doctrine of the apostles, and so intent on hearing all the words of this life that they were afraid to show any hostility to the apostles, lest the people should stone them; we may therefore conclude that the officers entreated them to accompany them to the council; and that they felt it their duty to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, and so cheerfully went with them, trusting in the Lord their God.

**Verse 28. *Did not we straitly command you***— ου παραγγελια παρηγγειλαμεν, With commanding did we not command you; a Hebraism—another proof of the accuracy and fidelity of St. Luke, who seems always to give every man's speech as he delivered it; not the substance, but the very words. See Acts 4:17.

***Not teach in this name?***— That is, of JESUS as the Christ or Messiah. His saving name, and the doctrines connected with it, were the only theme and substance of their discourses.

***Intend to bring this men's blood upon us.***— You speak in such a way of him to the people as to persuade them that we have crucified an innocent man; and that we must on that account fall victims to the Divine vengeance, or to the fury of the people, whom, by your teaching, you are exciting to sedition against us.

**Verse 29. *We ought to obey God rather than men.***— The same answer they gave before, Acts 4:19, founded on the same reason, which still stood good. We have received our commission from GOD; we dare not lay it down at the desire or command of men. See the note on Acts 4:19.

**Verse 30. *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus***— It was well to introduce this, that the council might at once see that they preached no strange God; and that he who so highly honored the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets, had yet more highly honored Jesus Christ in raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand, and proclaiming him as the only giver of salvation and the repentance which leads to it.



*Whom ye slew*— They charge them again with the murder of Christ, as they had done before, Acts 4:10-12, where see the notes.

**Verse 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand***— By a supereminent display of his almighty power, for so the right hand of God often means; he has raised him from the dead, and raised his human nature to the throne of his glory. Instead of **δεξια**, the right hand, the Codex Bezae has **δοξη**, to glory.

**A Prince**— The leader or director in the way. See the notes on Acts 3:15, 19.

**And a Savior**— **σωτηρα**, A deliverer or preserver. The word **σωτηρ** comes from **σωω** to save, deliver, preserve, escape from death or danger, bring into a state of security or safety. JESUS and SAVIOUR are nearly of the same import. See the note on John 1:17. He alone delivers from sin, death, and hell: by him alone we escape from the snares and dangers to which we are exposed: and it is by and in him, and in connection with him, that we are preserved blameless and harmless, and made the sons of God without rebuke. He alone can save the soul from sin, and preserve it in that state of salvation.

**To give repentance**— See this explained, Matthew 3:2.

**Forgiveness of sins.**— **αφεσιν των αμαρτιων**, The taking away of sins. This is not to be restrained to the mere act of justification; it implies the removal of sin, whether its power, guilt, or impurity be considered. Through Jesus we have the destruction of the power, the pardon of the guilt, and the cleansing from the pollution, of sin. And was Jesus Christ exalted a Prince and a Savior to give repentance and remission of sins to ISRAEL? Then none need despair. If such as were now before the apostles could be saved, then the salvation of the very worst of transgressors, of any or all on this side perdition, is gloriously possible. Yes, for he tasted death for every man; and he prayed for his murderers, compared to some of whom JUDAS himself was a saint.

The two words in Italics, in this text, to be, are impertinently introduced; it reads much better without them.

**Verse 32. *We are his witnesses***— The word **αυτου**, his, is omitted by AD, and several others of good note; the Syriac, all the Arabic, AETHiopic, and Vulgate. It does not seem to be necessary.

***Of these things***— **των πηματων τουτων**, Of these transactions: i.e. of Christ's life and miracles, and of your murderous proceedings against him.

***And so is also the Holy Ghost***— In the gift of tongues lately communicated; and by his power and influence on our souls, by which we are enabled to give irresistible witness of our Lord's resurrection.

***To them that obey him.***— We obey GOD, not you; and therefore God gives us this Spirit, which is in us a fountain of light, life, love, and power. The Spirit of God is given to the obedient: in proportion as a man who has received the first influences of it (for without this he cannot move in the spiritual life) is obedient to those influences, in the same proportion the gifts and graces, the light, life, and power, of the Holy Spirit, are increased in his soul.

**Verse 33. *They were cut to the heart***— **διεπριοντο**, Literally, they were sawn through, from **δια** through, and **πριω**, to saw. They were stung to the heart, not with compunction nor remorse, but with spite, malice, and revenge: for, having the murder of Christ thus brought home to their consciences, in the first feelings of their malice and revenge, they thought of destroying the persons who had witnessed their nefarious conduct.

**Verse 34. *A Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law***— “This,” says Dr. Lightfoot, “was Rabban Gamaliel the first; commonly, by way of distinction, called Rabban Gamaliel the elder. He was president of the council after the death of his own father, Rabban Simeon, who was the son of Hillel. He was St. Paul's master, and the 35th receiver of the traditions, and on this account might not be improperly termed **νομοδιδασκαλος**, a doctor of the law, because he was one that kept and handed down the Cabala received from Mount Sinai. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, his son Simeon succeeding him in the chair, who perished in the ruins of the city.” Though probably no favourer of Christianity, yet, for a Pharisee, he seems to have possessed a more liberal mind than most of his brethren; the following advice was at once humane, sensible, candid, and enlightened.

**Verse 35. *What ye intend to do***— *τι μελλετε πρασσειν*, What ye are about to do: they had already intended to destroy them; and they were now about to do it.

**Verse 36. *Rose up Theudas***— Josephus, Ant. lib. xx. cap. 4, sect. 1, mentions one named Theudas who was the author of an insurrection; about whom there has been much controversy whether he were the person spoken of here by Gamaliel. Every circumstance, as related by Josephus agrees well enough with what is referred to here, except the chronology; for the Theudas mentioned by Josephus made his insurrection when Fadus was governor of Judea; which was at least ten years after the time in which the apostles were brought before this council. Much labor has been thrown away in unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the historian and the evangelist, when it is very probable they speak of different transactions. Bp. Pearce thinks “the whole difficulty will disappear if we follow the opinion of Abp. Usher, who imagined that Luke’s Theudas was the same with that Judas of whom Josephus gives this account, Ant. lib. xvii. cap. 12, sect. 5; and War, lib. ii. cap. 4, sect. 1: ‘that a little after the death of Herod the Great, he raised an insurrection in Galilee, and aimed at getting the sovereignty of Judea,’ and that he was defeated and put to death, as is implied in sect. 10, of the same chapter. That Theudas and Judas might be names for the same person, Bp. Pearce thinks probable from the consideration, that the same apostle who is called Judas in John 14:22, and Luke 6:16, and called Jude in Jude 1, is, in Mark 3:18, called Thaddeus; and, in Matthew 10:3, is also called Lebbeus. This apostle having the names Judas and Thaddeus and Lebbeus given to him, two of these must have been the same; because no Jew had more than two names, unless when a patronymic name was given to him, as when Joseph surnamed Justus was called Barsabas, i.e. the son of Saba. It is no unreasonable thing to suppose that Thaddeus and Theudas are the same name; and that therefore the person called Theudas in Luke is probably the same whom Josephus, in the places above quoted, calls Judas.”

Dr. Lightfoot thinks that “Josephus has made a slip in his chronology;” and rather concludes that the Theudas mentioned in the Ant. lib. xx. cap. 4, sect. 1, is the person referred to in the text. I confess the matter does not appear to me of so much consequence; it is mentioned by Gamaliel in a careless way, and St. Luke, as we have already seen, scrupulously gives

the Lords of every speaker. The story was no doubt well known, and there were no doubts formed on it by the Jewish Council. We see plainly the end for which it was produced; and we see that it answered this end most amply; and certainly we have no farther concern with Gamaliel or his story.

***Boasting himself to be somebody***— λέγων ειναι τινα εαυτον, Saying that he was a great personage, i.e., according to the supposition of Bp. Pearce, setting himself up to be king of the Jews: see the preceding note. After εαυτον, himself, μαγαν, great one, is added by several very respectable MSS. and versions.

**Verse 37. *Judas of Galilee***— Concerning Judas of Galilee, Rabbi Abraham, in Jucasin, fol. 139, writes thus: “In this time there were three sects: for, besides the Pharisees and Sadducees, Judas of Galilee began another sect, which was called Essenes. They caused the Jews to rebel against the Romans, by asserting that they should not obey strangers; nor call any one Lord (or Governor) but the holy blessed God above.” Rabbi Abraham makes a mistake here: the Essenes existed long before the days of Judas of Galilee; but it is very possible that he might have been one of that sect. Josephus mentions the insurrection made by Judas of Galilee, Ant. lib. xviii. cap. 1, and says it was when Cyrenius was governor of Syria: see the note on Luke 2:2. Bp. Pearce supposes that there were two απογραφαι, taxations or enrolments; and that the one mentioned here took place ten years after that mentioned in Luke 2:1-5. He observes also, in conformity with the note on the preceding verse, that the Judas mentioned here, was not only different from that Judas or Theudas spoken of before, but that his pretense for rebellion was different; the former wished to have the empire of Judea; the latter only maintained that it was base and sinful to obey a heathen governor.

**Verse 38. *Refrain from these men***— Do not molest them, leave them to God; for if this counsel and work be of man it will come to nought, like the rebellion of Theudas, and that of Judas of Galilee: for whatever pretends to be done in the name of God, but is not of him, will have his curse and not his blessing. He whose name is prostituted by it will vindicate his injured honor, and avenge himself.

**Verse 39. *But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it***— Because his counsel cannot fail; and his work cannot be counteracted. If he be determined that this doctrine shall prevail, it is vain for us to attempt to suppress it.

***Lest haply ye be found-to fight against God.***— μηποτε και θεομαχοι ευρεθητε. Some have thought that they saw a parallel to these words in the speech of Diomedes, when, seeing Mars, associated with Hector, oppose the Grecians, he judged farther opposition vain, and desired his troops to retire from the battle.

τω δ' αιει παρα εις γε θεων, ος λοιγον αμυνει·  
και νυν οι παρα κεινος αρης, βροτω ανδρι εοικως.  
αλλα προς τρωας τετραμμενοι αιεν οπισσω  
εικετε, μηδε θεοις μενεαινεμεν ιφι μαχεσθαι.

Iliad, lib. v. 603.

*Protected always by some power divine;  
And Mars attends this moment at his side,  
In form a man. Ye therefore still retire,  
But facing still your foes: nor battle wage,  
However fierce, yet fruitless, with the gods.*

COWPER.

**Verse 40. *To him they agreed***— That is, not to slay the apostles, nor to attempt any farther to imprison them; but their malevolence could not be thus easily satisfied; and therefore they beat them—probably gave each of them thirty-nine stripes; and, having commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, they let them go. It was of JESUS they were afraid: not of the apostles. They plainly saw that, if the doctrine of Christ was preached, it must prevail; and, if it prevailed, they must come to nought. It was a wise saying of the popish bishops in the time of Queen Mary—If we do not put down this PRINTING, it will put us down: They labored to put down the printing, but they could not; and, under God, the printing, by exposing the wickedness of their doctrine and practices, and especially by multiplying copies of the New Testament, did most effectually put them down.

**Verse 41. *Rejoicing that they there counted worthy***, etc.— The whole verse may be read thus: But they departed rejoicing from the presence of the sanhedrin, because they there deemed worthy to be dishonored on account of THE NAME. The word,  $\alpha \upsilon \tau \omicron \upsilon$ , his, is omitted by ABCD, several others; Erpen's Syriac, and the Coptic. THE NAME, probably, by this time, distinguished both the author of salvation and the sacred system of doctrine which the apostles preached. To rejoice in persecution, and triumph in the midst of pain, shame, disgrace, and various threatened deaths, is the privilege of the New Testament. Nothing of this kind, as far as I can recollect, appears even in the choicest saints under the Old Testament dispensation. Some of them fretted and mourned, and sometimes even murmured; some merely possessed their souls in patience; Christians exulted and triumphed in the God of their salvation. This is no mean proof of the additional light and evidence which the New Testament dispensation affords.

**Verse 42. *Daily in the temple***— That is at the hours of morning and evening prayer; for they felt it their duty to worship God in public, and to help others to make a profitable use of the practice. Every man that professes Christianity should, in this respect also, copy their conduct: nor can any man be considered to have any religion, let his sentiments be what they may, who does not attend on the public worship of his Maker.

***They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus***.— Far from desisting, they became more zealous, yea, incessant, in their work. They took advantage of the public assemblies in the temple, as well as of all private opportunities, to teach all the truths of their holy religion; and to preach, proclaim Jesus as the only Messiah, that he who was crucified rose from the dead, and was exalted a Prince and a Savior at the right hand of God. How little must these men have regarded their lives, who in the midst of such danger could pursue a line of conduct which, to all human views, must terminate in their ruin. They loved their Master, they loved his work, they loved their thankless countrymen, they loved their present wages-persecution and stripes, and hated nothing but their own lives! These men were proper persons to be employed in converting the world. Preachers of the Gospel, look at those men, and learn at once your duty, your employment, and your interest. Live and preach like apostles, and God will crown your labors with similar success.



## CHAPTER 6.

*The Hellenistic Jews complain against the Hebrews, that their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations, 1. To remedy the evil complained of, the apostles appoint seven deacons to superintend the temporal affairs of the Church, 2-6. The progress of the word of God in Jerusalem, 7. Stephen, one of the deacons, becomes very eminent, and confounds various Jews of the synagogues of the Libertines, etc., 8-10. They suborn false witnesses against him, to get him put to death, 11-14. He appears before the council with an angelic countenance, 15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6.

**Verse 1.** *A murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews*— Those who are here termed Grecians, *ἑλληνισταί*, or Hellenists, were Jews who sojourned now at Jerusalem, but lived in countries where the Greek language was spoken, and probably in general knew no other. They are distinguished here from those called Hebrews, by which we are to understand native Jews, who spoke what was then termed the Hebrew language, a sort of Chaldaio-Syriac.

It has been remarked that Greek words ending in *ιστης* imply inferiority. *Ἕλληνες*, Hellenes, was distinguished from *ἑλληνισταί*: the former implies pure Greeks, native Greeks, who spoke the Greek tongue in its purity; and the latter, Jews or others sojourning among the Greeks, but who spoke the Greek language according to the Hebrew idiom. Pythagoras divided his disciples into two classes; those who were capable of entering into the spirit and mystery of his doctrine he called *πυθαγορειοί*, Pythagoreans; those who were of a different cast he termed *πυθαγορισται*, Pythagorists: the former were eminent and worthy of their master; the latter only so so. The same distinction is made between those called *αττικοί* and *αττικισταί*, Attics and Atticists, the pure and less pure Greeks, as between those called *Ἕλληνες* and *ἑλληνισταί*, Hellenes and Hellenists, pure Greeks and Graecising Jews. See Jamblicus, Deuteronomy Vit. Pyth. cap. 18, and Schoettgen on this place.



The cause of the murmuring mentioned here seems to have been this: When all the disciples had put their property into a common stock, it was intended that out of it each should have his quantum of supply. The foreign or Hellenistic Jews began to be jealous, that their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations, that they either had not the proportion, or were not duly served; the Palestine Jews being partial to those of their own country. This shows that the community of goods could never have been designed to become general. Indeed, it was no ordinance of God; and, in any state of society, must be in general impracticable. The apostles, hearing of this murmuring, came to the resolution mentioned below.

**Verse 2. *It is not reason***— *οὐκ ἀρεστον ἐστι*, it is not pleasing, proper, or fitting, that we should leave the word of God, that we should give up ourselves, or confide to others, the doctrine of salvation which God has commanded us to preach unto the people.

***And serve tables.***— Become providers of daily bread for your widows and poor: others can do this, to whom our important office is not intrusted.

**Verse 3. *Wherefore-look ye out among you seven men***— Choose persons in whom ye can all confide, who will distribute the provisions impartially, and in due time; and let these persons be the objects of the choice both of the Hebrews and Hellenists, that all cause of murmuring and discontent may be done away. Though seven was a sacred number among the Jews, yet there does not appear to be any mystery intended here. Probably the seven men were to take each his day of service; and then there would be a superintendent for these widows, etc., for each day of the week.

***Of honest report***— *μαρτυρομενους* Persons to whose character there is authentic testimony, well known and accredited.

***Full of the Holy Ghost***— Saved into the spirit of the Gospel dispensation; and made partakers of that Holy Ghost by which the soul is sanctified, and endued with those graces which constitute the mind that was in Christ.

***And wisdom***— Prudence, discretion, and economy; for mere piety and uprightness could not be sufficient, where so many must be pleased, and where frugality, impartiality, and liberality, must ever walk hand in hand.

*Whom we may appoint*— Instead of **καταστήσωμεν**, we may appoint, **καταστήσομεν**, we shall appoint, is the reading of ABCDE, and several others. It makes, however, very little difference in the sense.

**Verse 4.** *We will give ourselves continually to prayer*— **προσκαρτερησομεν**, We will steadfastly and invariably attend, we will carefully keep our hearts to this work. The word is very emphatic.

To prayer.—See this defined, Matthew 6:5. Even apostles could not live without prayer; they had no independent graces; what they had could not be retained without an increase; and for this increase they must make prayer and supplication, depending continually on their God.

*Ministry of the word.*— **διακονια του λογου**, The deaconship of the word. The continual proclamation of the Gospel of their Lord; and, to make this effectual to the souls of the hearers, they must continue in prayer: a minister who does not pray much, studies in vain.

The office of deacon, **διακονος**, came to the Christian from the Jewish Church. Every synagogue had at least three deacons, which were called **פּרָנִים** parnasim, from **פָּרַן** parnes, to feed, nourish, support, govern. The **פָּרַן** parnas, or deacon, was a sort of judge in the synagogue; and, in each, doctrine and wisdom were required, that they might be able to discern and give right judgment in things both sacred and civil. The **חָזָן** chazan, and **שַׁמַּשׁ** shamash, were also a sort of deacons. The first was the priest's deputy; and the last was, in some cases, the deputy of this deputy, or the sub-deacon. In the New Testament the apostles are called deacons, 2 Corinthians 6:4; Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23: see also 2 Corinthians 11:15. Christ himself, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, is called the deacon of the circumcision, **λεγω δε χριστον ιησουν διακονον γεγενησθαι περιτομης**, Romans 15:8. As the word implies to minister or serve, it was variously applied, and pointed out all those who were employed in helping the bodies or souls of men; whether apostles, bishops, or those whom we call deacons. Some remark that there were two orders of deacons: 1. **διακονοι της τραπιζης**, deacons of the TABLE, whose business it was to take care of the alms collected in the Church, and distribute them among the poor, widows, etc. 2. **διακονοι του λογου**, deacons of the WORD, whose business it was to preach, and variously

instruct the people. It seems that after the persecution raised against the apostolic Church, in consequence of which they became dispersed, the deaconship of tables ceased, as did also the community of goods; and Philip, who was one of these deacons, who at first served tables, betook himself entirely to preaching of the word: see Acts 8:4, etc. In the primitive Church, it is sufficiently evident that the deacons gave the bread and wine in the Eucharist to the believers in the Church, and carried it to those who were absent, Just. Mar. Apol. ii. p. 162; they also preached, and in some cases administered baptism. See Suicer on the words **διακονος**, **κηρυσσω**, and **βαπτισμα**. But it appears they did the two last by the special authority of the bishop. In the ancient Roman Church, and in the Romish Church, the number of seven deacons, in imitation of those appointed by the apostles, was kept up; and in the council of Neocaesarea it was decreed that this number should never be exceeded, even in the largest cities: vide Concil. Neocaesar. Canon. xiv. other Churches varied this number; and the Church of Constantinople had not less than one hundred. Deacons were ordained by the bishops, by imposition of hands. None was ordained deacon till he was twenty-five years of age, and we find that it was lawful for them to have wives. See Suicer under the word **διακονος**, and see the note on Matthew 20:26.

In the Church of England, (the purest and nearest to the apostolical model in doctrine and discipline of all national Churches,) a deacon receives ordination by the imposition of the hands of a bishop, in consequence of which he can preach, assist in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in general perform any sacred office, except consecrating the elements, and pronouncing the absolution. No person in this Church can be ordained deacon till he be twenty-three years of age, unless by dispensation from the Abp. of Canterbury. There were deaconesses, both in the apostolic and primitive Church, who had principally the care of the women, and visited and ministered to them in those circumstances in which it would have been improper for a deacon to attend. They also assisted in preparing the female candidates for baptism.

At present, the office for which the seven deacons were appointed is, in the Church of England, filled by the churchwardens and overseers of the poor; in other Churches and religious societies, by elders, stewards, etc., chosen by the people, and appointed by the minister.

**Verse 5. *Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost***— A person every way properly fitted for his work; and thus qualified to be the first martyr of the Christian Church.

***Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch***— A heathen Greek, who had not only believed in the God of Israel, but had also received circumcision, and consequently was a proselyte of the covenant; for, had he been only a proselyte of the gate, the Jews could not have associated with him. On the word proselyte, see the note on Exodus 12:43. As this is the only proselyte mentioned here, we may presume that all the rest were native Jews. From this Nicolas, it is supposed that the sect called Nicolaitans, mentioned Revelation 2:6, 15, derived their origin. Dr. Lightfoot doubts this, and rather inclines to derive the name “from נִכּוּלָא nicola, let us eat together; those brutes encouraging each other to eat meats offered to idols, like those in Isaiah 22:13, who said, Let us eat flesh and drink wine, etc.” Both Irenaeus and Epiphanius derive this sect from Nicolas the deacon. Clemens Alexandrinus gives this Nicolas a good character, even while he allows that the sect who taught the community of wives pretended to derive their origin from him. See on Revelation 2:6.

**Verse 6. *And when they had prayed***— Instead of και, and, the Codex Bezae reads οἱτινες, who, referring the act of praying to the apostles, which removes a sort of ambiguity. The apostles prayed for these persons, that they might in every respect be qualified for their office, and be made successful in it. And, when they had done this, they laid their hands upon them, and by this rite appointed them to their office. So then, it plainly appears that the choice of the Church was not sufficient: nor did the Church think it sufficient; but, as they knew their own members best, the apostles directed them, Acts 6:3, to choose those persons whom they deemed best qualified, according to the criterion laid down by the apostles themselves, that they should be of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Let us examine the process of this business: 1. There was an evident necessity that there should be more helpers in this blessed work 2. The apostles called the disciples together, that they might consider of this necessity and provide for it, Acts 6:3. They directed the disciples to choose out from among themselves such persons as they judged the most proper for the work. 4. They gave them the criterion by which their choice should be directed; not any man, not every man, not their nearest

relative, or best beloved friend; but such as were of honest report, whose public character was known to be unblemished; and men who were full of the Holy Ghost, the influence of which would keep all right within, and direct their hearts into all truth; and men who were known to be men of prudence and economy, for not every good and pious man may be proper for such a work. 5. Seven persons being chosen by the disciples, according to this criterion, are presented to the apostles for their approbation and confirmation. The apostles, receiving them from the hands of the Church, consecrated them to God by prayer, imploring his blessing on them and their labor. 7. When this was done, they laid their hands upon them in the presence of the disciples, and thus appointed them to this sacred and important work; for it is evident they did not get their commission merely to serve tables, but to proclaim, in connection with and under the direction of the apostles, the word of life. Let no man say that any of the things here enumerated was unnecessary, and let no Church pretend or affect to do without them. 1. No preacher or minister should be provided till there is a place for him to labor in, and necessity for his labor. 2. Let none be imposed upon the Church of Christ who is not of that Church, well known and fully approved by that branch of it with which he was connected. 3. Let none be sent to publish salvation from sin, and the necessity of a holy life, whose moral character cannot bear the strictest scrutiny among his neighbors and acquaintance. 4. Let none, however moral, or well reported of, be sent to convert souls, who has not the most solid reason to believe that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost. 5. Let those who have the power to appoint see that the person be a man of wisdom, i.e. sound understanding-for a witling or a blockhead, however upright, will never make a Christian minister; and that he be a man of prudence, knowing how to direct his own concerns, and those of the Church of God, with discretion. 6. Let no private person, nor number of private members in a Church, presume to authorize such a person, though in every way qualified to preach the Gospel; for even the one hundred and twenty primitive disciples did not arrogate this to themselves. 7. Let the person be brought to those to whom God has given authority in the Church, and let them, after most solemnly invoking God, lay their hands upon him, according to the primitive and apostolic plan, and thus devote him to the work of the ministry. 8. Let such a one from that moment consider himself the property of God and his Church, and devote all his time, talents, and

powers, to convert sinners, and build up believers in their most holy faith. 9. And let the Church of God consider such a person as legitimately and divinely sent, and receive him as the ambassador of Christ.

**Verse 7. *The word of God increased***— By such preachers as the apostles and these deacons, no wonder the doctrine of God increased-became widely diffused and generally known; in consequence of which, the number of the disciples must be greatly multiplied: for God will ever bless his own word, when ministered by those whom he has qualified to proclaim it.

***A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.***— This was one of the greatest miracles wrought by the grace of Christ: that persons so intent on the destruction of Christ, his apostles, and his doctrine, should at last espouse that doctrine, is astonishing; and that they who had withstood the evidence of the miracles of Christ should have yielded to the doctrine of his death and resurrection, is worthy of note. And from this we may learn that it is not by miracles that sinners are to be converted unto God, but by the preaching of Christ dying for their offenses, and rising again for their justification.

Instead of *λερεων*, priests, a few MSS., and the Syriac, read *ιουδαιων*, Jews; for the copyists seem to be struck here with two difficulties: 1. That such persons as these priests could be converted. 2. That the word *οχλος*, company, or multitude, could with propriety be applied to this class, which must have been inconsiderable in their numbers, when compared with the rest of the Jews. To preserve the ancient reading, which is undoubtedly genuine, some have altered the text by conjecture; and, by putting a comma after *οχλος*, and a *και* before *των ιερεων*, make the text read thus: And a great multitude, and some of the priests, were obedient to the faith. This conjecture is unnecessary, as there is no such difficulty here as to require so desperate an expedient, which is not recommended by the evidence of a single MS. or version. 1. The grace of Christ Jesus can save even a murderous Jewish priest: his death is a grand atonement for all crimes and for the worst of sinners. 2. In the twenty-four courses of priests, there was not a multitude merely, but multitudes: indeed the number of ecclesiastics at Jerusalem was enormous. A great company out of these might be converted, and yet multitudes be left behind.

**Verse 8. *Stephen, full of faith and power***— Instead of *πιστεως*, faith, *χαριτος*, grace, is the reading of ABD, several others, the Syriac of Erpen, the Coptic, Armenian, Vulgate, and some of the fathers. This reading Griesbach has admitted into the text. Some MSS. join both readings. Stephen was full of faith-gave unlimited credence to the promises of his Lord; he was full of grace-receiving the fulfillment of those promises, he enjoyed much of the unction of the Divine Spirit, and much of the favor of his God; and, in consequence, he was full of power, *δυναμεως*, of the Divine energy by which he was enabled to work great wonders and miracles among the people.

**Verse 9. *The synagogue-of the Libertines***, etc.— That Jews and proselytes from various countries had now come up to Jerusalem to bring offerings, and to attend the feast of pentecost, we have already seen, Acts 2:9-11. The persons mentioned here were foreign Jews, who appear to have had a synagogue peculiar to themselves at Jerusalem, in which they were accustomed to worship when they came to the public festivals.

Various opinions have been entertained concerning the Libertines mentioned here: Bp. Pearce's view of the subject appears to me to be the most correct.

“It is commonly thought that by this name is meant the sons of such Jews as had been slaves, and obtained their freedom by the favor of their masters; but it is to be observed that with these Libertines the Cyrenians and Alexandrians are here joined, as having one and the same synagogue for their public worship. And it being known that the Cyrenians (Acts 2:10) lived in Libya, and the Alexandrians in the neighborhood of it, it is most natural to look for the Libertines too in that part of the world. Accordingly we find Suidas, in his Lexicon, saying, upon the word *λιβερτινοι*, that it is *ονομα του εθνους*, the name of a people. And in Gest. Collationis Carthagine habitae inter Catholicos et Donatistas, published with Optatus's works, Paris, 1679, (No. 201, and p. 57,) we have these words: Victor episcopus Ecclesiae Catholicae LIBERTINENSIS dixit, Unitas est illic, publicam non latet conscientiam. Unity is there: all the world knows it. From these two passages it appears that there was in Libya a town or district called Libertina, whose inhabitants bore the name of *λιβερτινοι*, Libertines, when Christianity prevailed there. They had an episcopal see

among them, and the above-mentioned Victor was their bishop at the council of Carthage, in the reign of the Emperor Honorius. And from hence it seems probable that the town or district, and the people, existed in the time of which Luke is here speaking. They were Jews, (no doubt,) and came up, as the Cyrenian and Alexandrian Jews did, to bring their offerings to Jerusalem, and to worship God in the temple there. Cunaeus, in his Rep. Hebr. ii. 23, says that the Jews who lived in Alexandria and Libya, and all other Jews who lived out of the Holy Land, except those of Babylon and its neighborhood, were held in great contempt by the Jews who inhabited Jerusalem and Judea; partly on account of their quitting their proper country, and partly on account of their using the Greek language, and being quite ignorant of the other. For these reasons it seems probable that the Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, had a separate synagogue; (as perhaps the Cilicians and those of Asia had;) the Jews of Jerusalem not suffering them to be present in their synagogues, or they not choosing to perform their public service in synagogues where a language was used which they did not understand.”

It is supposed, also, that these synagogues had theological, if not philosophical, schools attached to them; and that it was the disciples or scholars of these schools who came forward to dispute with Stephen, and were enraged because they were confounded. For it is not an uncommon custom with those who have a bad cause, which can neither stand the test of Scripture nor reason, to endeavor to support it by physical when logical force has failed; and thus: —

*“Prove their doctrine orthodox,  
By apostolic blows and knocks.”*

In the reign of Queen Mary, when popery prevailed in this country, and the simplest women who had read the Bible were an overmatch for the greatest of the popish doctors; as they had neither Scripture nor reason to allege, they burned them alive, and thus terminated a controversy which they were unable to maintain. The same cause will ever produce the same effect: the Libertines, Cilicians, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, pursued this course: Stephen confounded them by Scripture and reason, and they beat his brains out with stones! This was the most effectual way to silence a disputant whose wisdom they could not resist. In the same way were the Protestants treated, when by Scripture and reason they had shown the



absurdity and wickedness of that anti-christian system which the fire and the sword were brought forth to establish. These persecutors professed great concern at first for the souls of those whom they variously tortured, and at last burned; but their tender mercies were cruel, and when they gave up the body to the flames, they most heartily consigned the soul to Satan. Scires à sanguine natos: their conduct proclaimed their genealogy.

**Verse 10. *They there not able to resist the wisdom***, etc.— He was wise, well exercised and experienced, in Divine things; and, as appears by his defense, in the following chapter, well versed in the Jewish history. The spirit by which he spake was the Holy Spirit, and its power was irresistible. They were obliged either to yield to its teachings, or were confounded by its truth. Several MSS. add to this verse, because he reproved them with boldness, they could not resist the truth. This reading is not genuine, though it exists (but in different forms) in some good MSS.

**Verse 11. *Then they suborned men***— *υπεβαλον*. They made underhand work; got associated to themselves profligate persons, who for money would swear any thing.

***Blasphemous words against Moses, and against God***.— This was the most deadly charge they could bring against him. We have already seen, Matthew 9:4, that blasphemy, when against GOD, signifies speaking impiously of his nature, attributes, or works; and, when against men, it signifies speaking injuriously of their character, blasting their reputation, etc. These false witnesses came to prove that he had blasphemed Moses by representing him as an impostor, or the like; and GOD, by either denying his being, his providence, the justice of his government, etc.

**Verse 12. *And they***— The Libertines, etc., mentioned before, stirred up the people—raised a mob against him, and, to assist and countenance the mob, got the elders and scribes to conduct it, who thus made themselves one with the basest of the people, whom they collected; and then, altogether, without law or form of justice, rushed on the good man, seized him, and brought him to a council who, though they sat in the seat of judgment, were ready for every evil work.

**Verse 13. *Against this holy place***— The temple, that it shall be destroyed.

*And the law*— That it cannot give life, nor save from death. It is very likely that they had heard him speak words to this amount, which were all as true as the spirit from which they proceeded; but they gave them a very false colouring, as we see in the succeeding verse.

**Verse 15.** *Saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel.*— Sayings like this are frequent among the Jewish writers, who represent God as distinguishing eminent men by causing a glory to shine from their faces. Rabbi Gedalia said that, “when Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh, they appeared like those angels which minister before the face of the Lord; for their stature appeared greater, and the splendor of their faces was like the sun, and their eyes like the wheels of the sun; their beard like clusters of grapes, and their words like thunder and lightning; and that, through fear of them, those who were present fell to the earth.”

The like is said of Moses, in Debarim Rabba, fol. 75. that “when Sammael (Satan) came to Moses, the splendor of his face was like the sun, and himself resembled an angel of God.” The reader may find several similar sayings in Schoettgen.

It appears that the light and power of God which dwelt in his soul shone through his face, and God gave them this proof of the falsity of the testimony which was now before them; for, as the face of Stephen now shone as the face of Moses did when he came down from the mount, it was the fullest proof that he had not spoken blasphemous words either against Moses or God, else this splendor of heaven had not rested upon him.

The history of the apostolic Church is a series of wonders. Every thing that could prevent such a Church from being established, or could overthrow it when established, is brought to bear against it. The instruments employed in its erection and defense had neither might nor power, but what came immediately from God. They work, and God works with them; the Church is founded and built up; and its adversaries, with every advantage in their favor, cannot overthrow it. Is it possible to look at this, without seeing the mighty hand of God in the whole? He permits devils and wicked men to work—to avail themselves of all their advantages, yet counterworks all their plots and designs, turns their weapons against themselves, and promotes his cause by the very means that were used to

destroy it. How true is the saying, There is neither might nor counsel against the Lord!

## CHAPTER 7.

*Stephen, being permitted to answer for himself relative to the charge of blasphemy brought against him by his accusers, gives a circumstantial relation of the call of Abraham, when he dwelt in Mesopotamia, in Charran, etc., 1-8. The history of Jacob and Joseph, 9-17. The persecution of their fathers in Egypt, 18, 19. The history of Moses and his acts till the exodus from Egypt, 20-37. The rebellion and idolatry of the Israelites in the wilderness, 38-43. The erection of the tabernacle of witness, which continued till the time of David, 44-46. Of the temple built by Solomon for that God who cannot be confined to temples built by hands, 47-50. Being probably interrupted in the prosecution of his discourse, he urges home the charge of rebellion against God, persecution of his prophets, the murder of Christ, and neglect of their own law against them, 51-53. They are filled with indignation, and proceed to violence, 54. He sees the glory of God, and Christ at the right hand of the Father; and declares the glorious vision, 55, 56. They rush upon him, drag him out of the city, and stone him, 57, 58. He involves the Lord Jesus, prays for his murderers, and expires, 59, 60.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7.

**Verse 1.** *Are these things so?*— Hast thou predicted the destruction of the temple? And hast thou said that Jesus of Nazareth shall change our customs, abolish our religious rites and temple service? Hast thou spoken these blasphemous things against Moses, and against God? Here was some color of justice; for Stephen was permitted to defend himself. And, in order to do this he thought it best to enter into a detail of their history from the commencement of their nation; and thus show how kindly God had dealt with them, and how ungraciously they and their fathers had requited Him. And all this naturally led him to the conclusion, that God could no longer bear with a people the cup of whose iniquity had been long overflowing; and therefore they might expect to find wrath, without mixture of mercy.

But how could St. Luke get all this circumstantial account? 1. He might have been present, and heard the whole; or, more probably, he had the account from St. Paul, whose companion he was, and who was certainly present when St. Stephen was judged and stoned, for he was consenting to his death, and kept the clothes of them who stoned him. See Acts 7:58; 8:1; 22:20.

**Verse 2. *Men, brethren, and fathers***— Rather, brethren and fathers, for **ἄνδρες** should not be translated separately from **ἀδελφοί**. Literally it is men-brethren, a very usual form in Greek; for every person knows that **ἄνδρες αθηναῖοι** and **ἄνδρες περσῶν** should not be translated men-Athenians and men-Persians, but simply Athenians and Persians. See Acts 17:22. So, in Luke 2:15, **ἄνθρωποι ποιμένες** should be translated shepherds, not men-shepherds. And **ἄνθρωπος βασιλεὺς** Matthew 18:23, should not be translated man-king, but king, simply. By translating as we do, men, brethren, and fathers, and putting a comma after men, we make Stephen address three classes, when in fact there were but two: the elders and scribes, whom he addressed as fathers; and the common people, whom he calls brethren. See Bp. Pearce, and see Acts 8:27.

***The God of glory appeared***, etc.— As Stephen was now vindicating himself from the false charges brought against him, he shows that he had uttered no blasphemy, either against God, Moses, or the temple; but states that his accusers, and the Jews in general, were guilty of the faults with which they charged him: that they had from the beginning rejected and despised Moses, and had always violated his laws. He proceeds to state that there is no blasphemy in saying that the temple shall be destroyed: they had been without a temple till the days of David; nor does God ever confine himself to temples built by hands, seeing he fills both heaven and earth; that Jesus is the prophet of whom Moses spoke, and whom they had persecuted, condemned, and at last put to death; that they were wicked and uncircumcised in heart and in ears, and always resisted the Holy Ghost as their fathers did. This is the substance of St. Stephen's defense as far as he was permitted to make it: a defense which they could not confute; containing charges which they most glaringly illustrated and confirmed, by adding the murder of this faithful disciple to that of his all-glorious Master.

***Was in Mesopotamia***— In that part of it where Ur of the Chaldees was situated, near to Babel, and among the rivers, (Tigris and Euphrates,) which gave the name of Mesopotamia to the country. See the note on Genesis 11:31.

***Before he dwelt in Charran***— This is called Haran in our translation of Genesis 11:31; this place also belonged to Mesopotamia, as well as Ur, but is placed west of it on the maps. It seems most probable that Abraham had two calls, one in Ur, and the other in Haran. He left Ur at the first call, and came to Haran; he left Haran at the second call, and came into the promised land. See these things more particularly stated in the notes on Genesis 12:1.

**Verse 4. *When his father was dead***— See the note on Genesis 11:26.

**Verse 5. *Gave him none inheritance***— Both Abraham and Jacob had small parcels of land in Canaan; but they had them by purchase, not by God's gift; for, as Abraham was obliged to buy a burying-place in Canaan, Genesis 23:3-18, it is obvious he had no inheritance there.

***And to his seed after him***— See Genesis 12:7; 13:15, and the notes there.

**Verse 6. *That his seed should sojourn in a strange land***— See Genesis 15:13, 14.

***Four hundred years.***— MOSES says, Exodus 12:40, that the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt was 430 years. See the note there. St. PAUL has the same number, Galatians 3:17; and so has Josephus, Ant. lib. ii. cap. 1, sect. 9; in Bell. lib. v. cap. 9, sect. 4. St. Stephen uses the round number of 400, leaving out the odd tens, a thing very common, not only in the sacred writers, but in all others, those alone excepted who write professedly on chronological matters.

**Verse 7. *Will I judge***— **κρίνω εγω**, I will punish, for in this sense the Greek word is frequently taken. “When,” says Bp. Pearce, “a malefactor is brought before a judge, the judge does three things: 1. he tries or judges him; 2. he then gives his judgment or sentence; and, 3. he puts the law in execution, and punishes him. Hence **κρίνω**, at different times, signifies each of these things; and the sense of the word is to be determined by the context. Here it signifies to punish, as **κριμα** is used for punishment, in

Romans 13:2; 1 Corinthians 11:29, compared with 1 Corinthians 11:30, 31.” The Egyptians, to whom the Israelites were in bondage, were punished by the ten plagues, described Exodus 7:19-12:30

**Verse 8. *He gave him the covenant of circumcision***— That is, he instituted the rite of circumcision, as a sign of that covenant which he had made with him and his posterity. See Genesis 17:10, etc.

***And so Abraham begat Isaac***— και ουτως, And thus, in this covenant, he begat Isaac; and as a proof that he was born under this covenant, was a true son of Abraham and inheritor of the promises, he circumcised him the eighth day; and this rite being observed in the family of Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons were born under the covenant; and thus their descendants, the twelve tribes, being born under the same covenant, and practising the same rite, were, by the ordinance of Gods legal inheritors of the promised land, and all the secular and spiritual advantages connected with it.

**Verse 9. *And the patriarchs***— The twelve sons of Jacob, thus called because each was chief or head of his respective family or tribe.

***Moved with envy***— ζηλωσαντες. We translate ζηλος variously: zeal or fervent affection, whether its object be good or bad, is its general meaning; and ζηλω signifies to be indignant, envious, etc. See the note on Acts 5:17. The brethren of Joseph, hearing of his dreams, and understanding them to portend his future advancement, filled with envy, (with which no ordinary portion of malice was associated,) sold Joseph into the land of Egypt, hoping by this means to prevent his future grandeur; but God, from whom the portents came, was with him, and made their envy the direct means of accomplishing the great design.

**Verse 10. *Gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh***— God gave him much wisdom, in consequence of which he had favor with the king of Egypt. See the whole of this remarkable history explained at large, Genesis 41:1-45:28.

**Verse 14. *Threescore and fifteen souls***.— There are several difficulties here, which it is hoped the reader will find satisfactorily removed in the note on Genesis 46:20. It is well known that in Genesis 46:27, and in Deuteronomy 10:22, their number is said to be threescore and ten; but Stephen quotes from the Septuagint, which adds five persons to the

account which are not in the Hebrew text, Machir, Gilead, Sutelaam, Taham, and Edem; but see the note referred to above.

**Verse 16. *And were carried over to Sychem***—“It is said, Genesis 50:13, that Jacob was buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre. And in Joshua 24:32, and Exodus 13:19, it is said that the bones of Joseph were carried out of Egypt by the Israelites, and buried in Shechem, which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem. As for the eleven brethren of Joseph, we are told by Josephus, Ant. lib. ii. cap. 8. sect. 2, that they were buried in Hebron, where their father had been buried. But, since the books of the Old Testament say nothing about this, the authority of Stephen (or of Luke here) for their being buried in Sychem is at least as good as that of Josephus for their being buried in Hebron.”—Bp. Pearce.

We have the uniform consent of the Jewish writers that all the patriarchs were brought out of Egypt, and buried in Canaan, but none, except Stephen, mentions their being buried in Sychem. As Sychem belonged to the Samaritans, probably the Jews thought it too great an honor for that people to possess the bones of the patriarchs; and therefore have carefully avoided making any mention of it. This is Dr. Lightfoot’s conjecture; and it is as probable as any other.

***That Abraham bought for a sum of money***— Two accounts seem here to be confounded: 1. The purchase made by Abraham of the cave and field of Ephron, which was in the field of Machpelah: this purchase was made from the children of Heth, Genesis 23:3, 10, 17. 2. The purchase made by Jacob, from the sons of Hamor or Emmor, of a sepulchre in which the bones of Joseph were laid: this was in Sychem or Shechem, Genesis 33:19; Joshua 24:32. The word Abraham, therefore, in this place, is certainly a mistake; and the word Jacob, which some have supplied, is doubtless more proper. Bp. Pearce supposes that Luke originally wrote, **ο ωνησατο τιμης αργυριου**, which he bought for a sum of money: i.e. which Jacob bought, who is the last person, of the singular number, spoken of in the preceding verse. Those who saw that the word **ωνησατο**, bought, had no nominative case joined to it, and did not know where to find the proper one, seem to have inserted **αβρααμ**, Abraham, in the text, for that purpose, without



sufficiently attending to the different circumstances of his purchase from that of Jacob's.

**Verse 18. *Which knew not Joseph.***— That is, did not approve of him, of his mode of governing the kingdom, nor of his people, nor of his God. See the note on Exodus 1:8.

**Verse 19. *The same dealt subtilty***— οὗτος κατασοφισαμενος, A word borrowed from the Septuagint, who thus translate the Hebrew לִי נִחְכַּמָּה nithchokmah lo, let us deal wisely with it, i.e. with cunning and deceit, as the Greek word implies; and which is evidently intended by the Hebrew. See Genesis 27:35, Thy brother came with subtilty, which the Targumist explains by בְּחֻכְמָא be-chokma, with wisdom, that is, cunning and deceit. For this the Egyptians were so remarkable that αἰγυπτιαζειν, to Egyptize, signified to act cunningly, and to use wicked devices. Hence the Jews compared them to foxes; and it is of them that Canticles, So 2:15, is understood by the rabbins: Take us the little foxes which spoil our vines; destroy the Egyptians, who, having slain our male children, sought to destroy the name of Israel from the face of the earth.

***To the end they might not live.***— Might not grow up and propagate, and thus build up the Hebrew nation.

**Verse 20. *Moses-was exceeding fair***— αστειος τω θεω, Was fair to God, i.e. was divinely beautiful. See the note on Exodus 2:2.

**Verse 22. *In all the wisdom of the Egyptians***— Who were, at that time, the most intelligent and best instructed people in the universe. Philo says, Moses was taught arithmetic, geometry, poetry, music, medicine, and the knowledge of hieroglyphics. In Sohar Cadash, fol. 46, it is said, “that, of the ten portions of wisdom which came into the world, the Egyptians had nine, and that all the inhabitants of the earth had only the remaining portion.” Much of the same nature may be seen in the rabbins, though they apply the term wisdom here to magic.

***Was mighty in words and in deeds.***— This may refer to the glorious doctrines he taught, and the miracles he wrought in Egypt. Josephus Ant. lib. ii. cap. 10, sect. 1, gives an account of his being general of an Egyptian army, defeating the Ethiopians, who had invaded Egypt, driving them back

into their own country, and taking Saba their capital, which was afterwards called Meroe. But this, like many other tales of the same writer, is worthy of little credit.

Phoenix says the same of Achilles: —

μυθων τε ρητηρ' εμεναι, πρηκτηρα τε εργαων. Il. ix. v. 443.

Not only an orator of words, but a performer of deeds.

**Verse 23. *When he was full forty years old***— This was a general tradition among the Jews: “Moses was forty years in Pharaoh’s court, forty years in Midian, and forty years he served Israel.”

***To visit his brethren***— Probably on the ground of trying to deliver them from their oppressive bondage. This desire seems to have been early infused into his mind by the Spirit of God; and the effect of this desire to deliver his oppressed countrymen was his refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter—see Hebrews 11:24, and thus renouncing all right to the Egyptian crown, choosing rather to endure addiction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

**Verse 24. *Smote the Egyptian***— See this explained, Exodus 2:11, 12.

**Verse 25. *He supposed his brethren would have understood***, etc.— He probably imagined that, as he felt from the Divine influence he was appointed to be their deliverer, they would have his Divine appointment signified to them in a similar way; and the act of justice which he now did in behalf of his oppressed countryman would be sufficient to show them that he was now ready to enter upon his office, if they were willing to concur.

**Verse 26. *Unto them as they strove***— Two Hebrews, See on Exodus 2:13, etc.

**Verse 30. *In a flame of fire in a bush***.— See this and the following verses largely explained in the notes on Exodus 3:1-8.

**Verse 36. *He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders***, etc.— Thus the very person whom they had rejected, and, in effect, delivered up into the hands of Pharaoh that he might be slain, was the person alone by whom they were redeemed from their Egyptian bondage. And does not St.

Stephen plainly say by this, that the very person, Jesus Christ, whom they had rejected and delivered up into the hands of Pilate to be crucified, was the person alone by whom they could be delivered out of their spiritual bondage, and made partakers of the inheritance among the saints in light? No doubt they felt that this was the drift of his speech.

**Verse 37. *This is that Moses, which said-A prophet***, etc.— This very Moses, so highly esteemed and honored by God, announced that very prophet whom ye have lately put to death. See the observations at Deuteronomy 18:22.

**Verse 38. *With the angel which spake to him***— Stephen shows that Moses received the law by the ministry of angels; and that he was only a mediator between the angel of God and them.

***The lively oracles***— λογια ζωντα, The living oracles. The doctrines of life, those doctrines-obedience to which entitled them, by the promise of God, to a long life upon earth, which spoke to them of that spiritual life which every true believer has in union with his God, and promised that eternal life which those who are faithful unto death shall enjoy with him in the realms of glory.

The Greek word λογιον, which we translate oracle, signifies a Divine revelation, a communication from God himself, and is here applied to the Mosaic law; to the Old Testament in general, Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12; and to Divine revelation in general, 1 Peter 4:11.

**Verse 39. *In their hearts turned back again into Egypt***— Became idolaters, and preferred their Egyptian bondage and their idolatry to the promised land and the pure worship of God. See the whole of these transactions explained at large in the notes on Exodus 32:1-35.

**Verse 42. *Then God turned, and gave them up***, etc.— He left them to themselves, and then they deified and worshipped the sun, moon, planets, and principal stars.

***In the book of the prophets***— As this quotation is found in Amos, Amos 5:25, by the book of the prophets is meant the twelve minor prophets, which, in the ancient Jewish division of the sacred writings, formed only one book.

*Have ye offered to me slain beasts*— It is certain that the Israelites did offer various sacrifices to God, while in the wilderness; and it is as certain that they scarcely ever did it with an upright heart. They were idolatrous, either in heart or act, in almost all their religious services; these were therefore so very imperfect that they were counted for nothing in the sight of God; for this seems to be strongly implied in the question here asked, Have ye offered to ME (exclusively and with an upright heart) slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years? On the contrary, these forty years were little else than a tissue of rebellion and idolatry.

**Verse 43.** *Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them.*— This is a literal translation of the place, as it stands in the Septuagint; but in the Hebrew text it stands thus: But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Molech, and Chiun, your images, the star of your god which ye made to yourselves. This is the simple version of the place, unless we should translate מלככם כות ונסאתם את כות venasatem eth Siccuth malkekem, ye took SIKUTH your king, (instead of ye took up the tabernacle of your MOLEK,) as some have done. The place is indeed very obscure, and the two texts do not tend to cast light on each other. The rabbins say siccuth, which we translate tabernacle, is the name of an idol. Molech is generally understood to mean the sun; and several persons of good judgment think that by Remphan or Raiphan is meant the planet Saturn, which the Copts call ρηφαν, Rephan. It will be seen above that instead of Remphan, or, as some of the best MSS. have it, Rephan, the Hebrew text has כִּי־ן Chiun, which might possibly be a corruption of רִי־פ Reiphan, as it would be very easy to mistake the כ caph for ר resh, and the vau shurek ן for פ pe. This emendation would bring the Hebrew, Septuagint, and the text of Luke, nearer together; but there is no authority either from MSS. or versions for this correction: however, as Chiun is mentioned in no other place, though Molech often occurs, it is the more likely that there might have been some very early mistake in the text, and that the Septuagint has preserved the true reading.

It was customary for the idolaters of all nations to carry images of their gods about them in their journeys, military expeditions, etc.; and these, being very small, were enclosed in little boxes, perhaps some of them in

the shape of temples, called tabernacles; or, as we have it, Acts 19:24, shrines. These little gods were the penates and lares among the Romans, and the tselems or talismans among the ancient eastern idolaters. The Hebrew text seems to refer to these when it says, the tabernacle of your Molech, and Chiun, your images, צלמיכם tsalmeycem, your tselems, τοὺς τύπους, the types or simulachres of your gods. See the note on Genesis 31:19. Many of those small portable images are now in my own collection, all of copper or brass; some of them the identical penates of the ancient Romans, and others the offspring of the Hindoo idolatry; they are from an ounce weight to half a pound. Such images as these I suppose the idolatrous Israelites, in imitation of their neighbors, the Moabites, Ammonites, etc., to have carried about with them; and to such the prophet appears to me unquestionably to allude.

*I will carry you away beyond Babylon.*— You have carried your idolatrous images about; and I will carry you into captivity, and see if the gods in whom ye have trusted can deliver you from my hands. Instead of beyond Babylon, Amos, from whom the quotation is made, says, I will carry you beyond Damascus. Where they were carried was into Assyria and Media, see 2 Kings 17:6: now, this was not only beyond Damascus, but beyond Babylon itself; and, as Stephen knew this to be the fact, he states it here, and thus more precisely fixes the place of their captivity. The Holy Spirit, in his farther revelations, has undoubted right to extend or illustrate those which he had given before. This case frequently occurs when a former prophecy is quoted in later times.

**Verse 44.** *Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness*— That is, the tabernacle in which the two tables of stone written by the finger of God were laid up, as a testimony that he had delivered these laws to the people, and that they had promised to obey them. As one great design of St. Stephen was to show the Jews that they placed too much dependence on outward privileges, and had not used the law, the tabernacle, the temple, nor the temple service, for the purpose of their institution, he labors to bring them to a due sense of this, that conviction might lead to repentance and conversion. And he farther shows that God did not confine his worship to one place, or form. He was worshipped without any shrine in the times of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. He was worshipped with a tabernacle, or portable temple, in the

wilderness. He was worshipped also in the fixed temple projected by David, but built by Solomon. He asserts farther that his infinite majesty cannot be confined to temples, made by human hands; and where there is neither tabernacle nor temple, (in any part of his vast dominions,) he may be worshipped acceptably by the upright in heart. Thus he proves that neither tabernacle nor temple are essentially requisite for the true worship of the true God. Concerning the tabernacle to which St. Stephen here refers, the reader is requested to consult the notes on Exodus 25:8, etc., and the subsequent chapters.

*Speaking unto Moses*— ὁ λαλῶν, Who spake, as in the margin; signifying the angel of God who spake to Moses, or God himself. See Exodus 25:40.

**Verse 45. *Brought in with Jesus***— That is, with JOSHUA, whom the Greek version, quoted by St. Stephen, always writes *Ἰησοῦς*, JESUS, but which should constantly be written Joshua in such cases as the present, in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion.

*Possession of the Gentiles*— τῶν ἐθνῶν, of the heathens, whom Joshua conquered, and gave their land to the children of Israel.

**Verse 46. *Desired to find a tabernacle***— This was in David's heart, and it met with the Divine approbation: see 2 Samuel 7:2, Ac., and see the purpose, Psalm 132:2-5; but, as David had been a man of war, and had shed much blood, God would not permit him to build the temple; but he laid the plan and made provision for it, and Solomon executed the design.

**Verse 48. *The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands***— Here St. Stephen evidently refers to Solomon's speech, 1 Kings 8:27. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have builded? Both Solomon and St. Stephen mean that the majesty of God could not be contained, not even in the whole vortex of nature; much less in any temple which human hands could erect.

*As saith the prophet*— The place referred to is Isaiah 66:1, 2: Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool. Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest, etc., with which the quotation by Stephen agrees.

**Verse 50. *Hath not my hand made all these things?***— Stephen certainly had not finished his discourse, nor drawn his inferences from the facts already stated; but it is likely that, as they perceived he was about to draw conclusions unfavourable to the temple and its ritual, they immediately raised up a clamor against him, which was the cause of the following very cutting address.

**Verse 51. *Ye stiff-necked***— *σκληροτραχηλοι*. A metaphor taken from untoward oxen, who cannot be broken into the yoke; and whose strong necks cannot be bended to the right or the left.

***Uncircumcised in heart and ears***— This was a Jewish mode of speech, often used by the prophets. Circumcision was instituted, not only as a sign and seal of the covenant into which the Israelites entered with their Maker, but also as a type of that purity and holiness which the law of God requires; hence there was an excision of what was deemed not only superfluous but also injurious; and by this cutting off, the propensity to that crime which ruins the body, debases the mind, and was generally the forerunner of idolatry, was happily lessened. It would be easy to prove this, were not the subject too delicate. Where the spirit of disobedience was found, where the heart was prone to iniquity, and the ears impatient of reproof and counsel, the person is represented as uncircumcised in those parts, because devoted to iniquity, impatient of reproof, and refusing to obey. In Pirkey Eliezer, chap. 29, “Rabbi Seira said, There are five species of uncircumcision in the world; four in man, and one in trees. Those in man are the following: —

“1. Uncircumcision of the EAR. Behold, their EAR is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken, Jeremiah 6:10.

“2. The uncircumcision of the LIPS. How shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised LIPS? Exodus 6:12.

“3. Uncircumcision of HEART. If then their uncircumcised HEARTS be humbled, Leviticus 26:41. Circumcise therefore the FORESKIN of YOUR HEART, Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4. For all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the HEART, Jeremiah 9:26.

“4. The uncircumcision of the FLESH. Ye shall circumcise the FLESH of your FORESKIN, etc., Genesis 17:11.”

*Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost*— 1. Because they were uncircumcised in heart, they always resisted the influences of the Holy Spirit, bringing light and conviction to their minds; in consequence of which they became hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and neither repented at the preaching of John, nor credited the glad tidings told them by Christ and the apostles. 2. Because they were uncircumcised in ears, they would neither hear nor obey Moses, the prophets, Christ, nor the apostles.

*As your fathers did, so do ye.*— They were disobedient children, of disobedient parents: in all their generations they had been disobedient and perverse. This whole people, as well as this text, are fearful proofs that the Holy Spirit, the almighty energy of the living God, may be resisted and rendered of none effect. This Spirit is not sent to stocks, stones, or machines, but to human beings endued with rational souls; therefore it is not to work on them with that irresistible energy which it must exert on inert matter, in order to conquer the *vis inertiae* or disposition to abide eternally in a motionless state, which is the state of all inanimate beings; but it works upon understanding, will, judgment, conscience, etc., in order to enlighten, convince, and persuade. If, after all, the understanding, the eye of the mind, refuses to behold the light; the will determines to remain obstinate; the judgment purposes to draw false inferences; and the conscience hardens itself against every check and remonstrance, (and all this is possible to a rational soul, which must be dealt with in a rational way,) then the Spirit of God, being thus resisted, is grieved, and the sinner is left to reap the fruit of his doings. To force the man to see, feel, repent, believe, and be saved, would be to alter the essential principles of his creation and the nature of mind, and reduce him into the state of a machine, the *vis inertiae* of which was to be overcome and conducted by a certain quantum of physical force, superior to that resistance which would be the natural effect of the certain quantum of the *vis inertiae* possessed by the subject on and by which this agent was to operate. Now, man cannot be operated on in this way, because it is contrary to the laws of his creation and nature; nor can the Holy Ghost work on that as a machine which himself has made a free agent. Man therefore may, and generally does, resist the Holy Ghost; and the whole revelation of God bears unequivocal testimony to this most dreadful possibility, and most awful truth. It is trifling with the sacred text to say that resisting the Holy Ghost here



means resisting the laws of Moses, the exhortations, threatenings, and promises of the prophets, etc. These, it is true, the uncircumcised ear may resist; but the uncircumcised heart is that alone to which the Spirit that gave the laws, exhortations, promises, etc., speaks; and, as matter resists matter, so spirit resists spirit. These were not only uncircumcised in ear, but uncircumcised also in heart; and therefore they resisted the Holy Ghost, not only in his declarations and institutions, but also in his actual energetic operations upon their minds.

**Verse 52. *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?***— Ye have not only resisted the Holy Ghost, but ye have persecuted all those who have spoken to you in his name, and by his influence: thus ye prove your opposition to the Spirit himself, by your opposition to every thing that proceeds from him.

***They have slain them,*** etc.— Isaiah, who showed before of the coming of Christ, the Jews report, was sawn asunder at the command of Manasseh.

***The coming of the Just One***— του δικαίου, Meaning Jesus Christ; emphatically called the just or righteous person, not only because of the unspotted integrity of his heart and life, but because of his plenary acquittal, when tried at the tribunal of Pilate: I find no fault at all in him. The mention of this circumstance served greatly to aggravate their guilt. The character of Just One is applied to our Lord in three other places of Scripture: Acts 3:14; 22:14; and James 5:6.

***The betrayers and murderers***— Ye first delivered him up into the hands of the Romans, hoping they would have put him to death; but, when they acquitted him, then, in opposition to the declaration of his innocence, and in outrage to every form of justice, ye took and murdered him. This was a most terrible charge; and one against which they could set up no sort of defense. No wonder, then, that they were instigated by the spirit of the old destroyer, which they never resisted, to add another murder to that of which they had been so recently guilty.

**Verse 53. *By the disposition of angels***— εις διαταγας αγγελων. After all that has been said on this difficult passage, perhaps the simple meaning is, that there were ranks, διαταγαί, of angels attending on the Divine Majesty when he gave the law: a circumstance which must have added

greatly to the grandeur and solemnity of the occasion; and to this Psalm 68:17 seems to me most evidently to allude: The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even many thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in SINAI, in the holy place. It was not then by the mouths nor by the hands of angels, as prime agents, that Moses, and through him the people, received the law; but God himself gave it, accompanied with many thousands of those glorious beings. As it is probable they might be assisting in this most glorious solemnity, therefore St. Paul might say, Galatians 3:19, that it was ordained by angels, *διαταγεις δι' αγγελων*, in the hand of a Mediator. And as they were the only persons that could appear, for no man hath seen God at any time, therefore the apostle might say farther, (if indeed he refers to the same transaction, see the note there,) the word spoken by angels was steadfast, Hebrews 2:2. But the circumstances of this case are not sufficiently plain to lead to the knowledge of what was done by the angels in this most wonderful transaction; only we learn, from the use made of this circumstance by St. Stephen, that it added much to the enormity of their transgression, that they did not keep a law, in dispensing of which the ministry of angels had been employed. Some think Moses, Aaron, and Joshua are the angels here intended; and others think that the fire, light, darkness, cloud and thick darkness were the angels which Jehovah used on this occasion, and to which St. Stephen refers; but neither of these senses appears sufficiently natural, and particularly the latter.

**Verse 54.** *They were cut to the heart*— *διεπριοντο*, They were sawn through. See the note on Acts 5:33.

*They gnashed on him with their teeth.*— They were determined to hear him no longer; were filled with rage against him, and evidently thirsted for his blood.

**Verse 55.** *Saw the glory of God*— The Shekinah, the splendor or manifestation of the Divine Majesty.

*And Jesus standing on the right hand of God*— In his official character, as Mediator between God and man.

Stephen had this revelation while in the Sanhedrin; for as yet he had not been forced out of the city. See Acts 7:58.

**Verse 57. *They-stopped their ears***— As a proof that he had uttered blasphemy, because he said, He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. This was a fearful proof against them; for if Jesus was at the right hand of God, then they had murdered an innocent person; and they must infer that God's justice must speedily avenge his death. They were determined not to suffer a man to live any longer who could say he saw the heavens opened and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God.

**Verse 58. *Cast him out of the city, and stoned him***— They did not however wait for any sentence to be pronounced upon him; it seems they were determined to stone him first, and then prove, after it had been done, that it was done justly. For the manner of stoning among the Jews, see the note on Leviticus 24:23.

***The witnesses laid down their clothes***— To illustrate this whole transaction, see the observations at the end of this chapter. {Acts 7:60}

**Verse 59. *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God***— The word God is not found in any MS. or version, nor in any of the primitive fathers except Chrysostom. It is not genuine, and should not be inserted here: the whole sentence literally reads thus: And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! Here is a most manifest proof that prayer is offered to Jesus Christ; and that in the most solemn circumstances in which it could be offered, viz., when a man was breathing his last. This is, properly speaking, one of the highest acts of worship which can be offered to God; and, if Stephen had not conceived Jesus Christ to be GOD, could he have committed his soul into his hands?

We may farther observe that this place affords a full proof of the immateriality of the soul; for he could not have commended his spirit to Christ, had he believed that he had no spirit, or, in other words, that his body and soul were one and the same thing. Allowing this most eminent saint to have had a correct notion of theology, and that, being full of the Holy Ghost, as he was at this time, he could make no mistake in matters of such vast weight and importance, then these two points are satisfactorily stated in this verse: 1. That Jesus Christ is GOD; for Stephen died praying to him. 2. That the soul is immaterial; for Stephen, in dying, commends his departing spirit into the hand of Christ.

**Verse 60. *He kneeled down***— That he might die as the subject of his heavenly MASTER-acting and suffering in the deepest submission to his Divine will and permissive providence; and, at the same time, showing the genuine nature of the religion of his Lord, in pouring out his prayers with his blood in behalf of his murderers!

***Lay not this sin to their charge.***— That is, do not impute it to them so as to exact punishment. How much did the servant resemble his Lord, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do! This was the cry of our Lord in behalf of his murderers; and the disciple, closely copying his Master, in the same spirit, and with the same meaning, varies the expression, crying with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! What an extent of benevolence! And in what a beautiful light does this place the spirit of the Christian religion! Christ had given what some have supposed to be an impossible command; Love your enemies; pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you. And Stephen shows here, in his own person, how practicable the grace of his Master had made this sublime precept.

***He fell asleep.***— This was a common expression among the Jews to signify death, and especially the death of good men. But this sleep is, properly speaking, not attributable to the soul, but to the body; for he had commended his spirit to the Lord Jesus, while his body was overwhelmed with the shower of stones cast on him by the mob.

After the word *εκοιμηθη*, fell asleep, one MS. adds, *εν ειρηνη*, in peace; and the Vulgate has, in Domino, in the Lord. Both these readings are true, as to the state of St. Stephen; but I believe neither of them was written by St. Luke.

The first clause of the next chapter should come in here, And Saul was consenting unto his death: never was there a worse division than that which separated it from the end of this chapter: this should be immediately altered, and the amputated member restored to the body to which it belongs.

1. THOUGH I have spoken pretty much at large on the punishment of stoning among the Jews, in the note on Leviticus 24:23, yet, as the following extracts will serve to bring the subject more fully into view, in

reference to the case of St. Stephen, the reader will not be displeased to find them here.

Dr. Lightfoot sums up the evidence he has collected on this subject, in the following particulars: —

“I. The place of stoning was without the sanhedrin, according as it is said, bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp, Leviticus 24:14. It is a tradition, the place of stoning was without three camps. The gloss tells us that the court was the camp of the Divine Presence; the mountain of the temple, the camp of the Levites; and Jerusalem, the camp of Israel. Now, in every sanhedrin, in whatever city, the place of stoning was without the city, as it was at Jerusalem.

We are told the reason by the Gemarists, why the place of stoning was without the sanhedrin, and again without three camps: viz. If the Sanhedrin go forth and sit without the three camps, they make the place for stoning also distant from the sanhedrin, partly lest the sanhedrin should seem to kill the man; partly, that by the distance of the place there may be a little stop and space of time before the criminal come to the place of execution, if peradventure any one might offer some testimony that might make for him; for in the expectation of some such thing: —

“II. There stood one at the door of the sanhedrin having a handkerchief in his hand, and a horse at such a distance as it was only within sight. If any one therefore say, I have something to offer in behalf of the condemned person, he waves the handkerchief, and the horseman rides and calls back the people. Nay, if the man himself say, I have something to offer in my own defense, they bring him back four or five times one after another, if it be any thing of moment that he hath to say.” I doubt they hardly dealt so gently with the innocent Stephen.

“III. If no testimony arise that makes any thing for him, then they go on to stoning him: the crier proclaiming before him, ‘N. the son of N. comes forth to be stoned for such or such a crime. N. and N. are the witnesses against him; if any one have any thing to testify in his behalf, let him come forth and give his evidence.’

“IV. When they come within ten cubits of the place where he must be stoned, they exhort him to confess, for so it is the custom for the

malefactor to confess, because every one that confesseth hath his part in the world to come, as we find in the instance of Achan, etc.

“V. When they come within four cubits of the place, they strip off his clothes, and make him naked.

“VI. The place of execution was twice a man’s height. One of the witnesses throws him down upon his loins; if he roll on his breast, they turn him on his loins again. If he die so, well. If not, then the other witness takes up a stone, and lays it upon his heart. If he die so, well. If not, he is stoned by all Israel.

“VII. All that are stoned, are handed also, etc.” These things I thought fit to transcribe the more largely, that the reader may compare this present action with this rule and common usage of doing it.

“1. It may be questioned for what crime this person was condemned to die? You will say for blasphemy for the have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. But no one is condemned as a blasphemer, unless for abusing the sacred name with four letters, viz. יהוה YeHoVaH. Hence it is that although they oftentimes accused our Savior as a blasphemer, yet he was not condemned for this, but because he used witchcraft and deceived Israel, and seduced them into apostasy. And those are reckoned among persons that are to be stoned: He that evilly persuades; and he that draws into apostasy; and he that is a conjuror.

“2. It may farther be questioned whether our blessed martyr was condemned by any formal sentence of the sanhedrin, or hurried in a tumultuary manner by the people; and so murdered: it seems to be the latter.”

2. The defense of Stephen against the charges produced by his accusers must be considered as being indirect; as they had a show of truth for the ground of their accusations, it would have been improper at once to have roundly denied the charge. There is no doubt that Stephen had asserted and proved JESUS to be the Christ or MESSIAH; and that the whole nation should consider him as such, receive his doctrine, obey him, or expose themselves to the terrible sentence denounced in the prophecy of Moses: Whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my

name, I will require it of him, Deuteronomy 18:19; for they well knew that this word implied that Divine judgments should inevitably fall upon them. To make proper way for this conclusion, Stephen enters into a detail of their history, showing that, from the beginning, God had in view the dispensation which was now opening, and that his designs were uniformly opposed by their impious forefathers. That, notwithstanding all this, God carried on his work: First, by revealing his will to ABRAHAM, and giving him the rite of circumcision, which was to be preserved among his descendants. Secondly, to MOSES and AARON in Egypt. Thirdly, to the whole congregation of Israel at Mount Sinai, and variously in the wilderness. Fourthly, by instituting the tabernacle worship, which was completed in the promised land, and continued till the days of Solomon, when the temple was builded, and the worship of God became fixed. Fifthly, by the long race of prophets raised up under that temple, who had been all variously persecuted by their forefathers, who departed from the true worship, and frequently became idolatrous; in consequence of which God gave them up into the hands of their enemies, and they were carried into captivity. How far St. Stephen would have proceeded, or to what issue he would have brought his discourse, we can only conjecture, as the fury of his persecutors did not permit him to come to a conclusion. But this they saw most clearly, that, from his statement, they could expect no mercy at the hand of God, if they persisted in their opposition to Jesus of Nazareth, and that their temple and political existence must fall a sacrifice to their persevering obstinacy. Their guilt stung them to the heart, and they were determined rather to vent their insupportable feelings by hostile and murderous acts, than in penitential sorrow and supplication for mercy. The issue was the martyrdom of Stephen; a man of whom the sacred writings give the highest character, and a man who illustrated that character in every part of his conduct. Stephen is generally called the proto-martyr, i.e. the FIRST martyr or witness, as the word **μάρτυρ** implies; the person who, at the evident risk and ultimate loss of his life, bears testimony to TRUTH. This honor, however, may be fairly contested, and the palm at least divided between him and John the Baptist. The martyrdom of Stephen, and the spirit in which he suffered, have been an honor to the cause for which he cheerfully gave up his life, for eighteen hundred years. While Christianity endures, (and it will endure till time is swallowed up in

eternity,) the martyrdom of Stephen will be the model, as it has been, for all martyrs, and a cause of triumph to the Church of God.

3. I cannot close these observations without making one remark on his prayer for his murderers. Though this shows most forcibly the amiable, forgiving spirit of the martyr, yet we must not forget that this, and all the excellent qualities with which the mind of this blessed man was endued, proceeded from that HOLY GHOST of whose influences his mind was full. The prayer therefore shows most powerfully the matchless benevolence of GOD. Even these most unprincipled, most impious, and most brutal of all murderers, were not out of the reach of HIS mercy! His Spirit influenced the heart of this martyr to pray for his destroyers; and could such prayers fail? No: Saul of Tarsus, in all probability was the first fruits of them. St. Augustine has properly remarked, *Si Stephanus non orasset, ecclesia Paulum non haberet*. If Stephen had not prayed, the Church of Christ could not have numbered among her saints the apostle of the Gentiles. Let this example teach us at once the spirit that becomes a disciple of Christ, the efficacy of prayer, and the unbounded philanthropy of God.



## CHAPTER 8.

*A general persecution is raised against the Church, 1. Stephen's burial, 2. Saul greatly oppresses the followers of Christ, 3, 4. Philip the deacon goes to Samaria, preaches, works many miracles, converts many persons, and baptizes Simon the sorcerer, 5-13. Peter and John are sent by the apostles to Samaria; they confirm the disciples, and by prayer and imposition of hands they confer the Holy Spirit, 14-17. Simon the sorcerer, seeing this, offers them money, to enable him to confer the Holy Spirit, 18, 19. He is sharply reprov'd by Peter, and exhorted to repent, 20-23. He appears to be convinced of his sin, and implores an interest in the apostle's prayers, 24. Peter and John, having preached the Gospel in the villages of Samaria, return to Jerusalem, 25. An angel of the Lord commands Philip to go towards Gaza, to meet an Ethiopian eunuch, 26. He goes, meets, and converses with the eunuch, preaches the Gospel to him, and baptizes him, 27-38. The Spirit of God carries Philip to Azotus, passing through which, he preaches in all the cities till he comes to Caesarea, 39, 40.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 8.

**Verse 1.** *Saul was consenting unto his death.*— So inveterate was the hatred that this man bore to Christ and his followers that he delighted in their destruction. So blind was his heart with superstitious zeal that he thought he did God service by offering him the blood of a fellow creature, whose creed he supposed to be erroneous. The word **συνευδοκῶν** signifies gladly consenting, being pleased with his murderous work! How dangerous is a party spirit; and how destructive may zeal even for the true worship of God prove, if not inspired and regulated by the spirit of Christ!

It has already been remarked that this clause belongs to the conclusion of the preceding chapter; so it stands in the Vulgate, and so it should stand in every version.

***There was a great persecution***— The Jews could not bear the doctrine of Christ's resurrection; for this point being proved demonstrated his innocence and their enormous guilt in his crucifixion; as therefore the apostles continued to insist strongly on the resurrection of Christ, the persecution against them became hot and general.

***They were all scattered abroad—except the apostles.***— Their Lord had commanded them, when persecuted in one city, to flee to another: this they did, but, wherever they went, they proclaimed the same doctrines, though at the risk and hazard of their lives. It is evident, therefore, that they did not flee from persecution, or the death it threatened; but merely in obedience to their Lord's command. Had they fled through the fear of death, they would have taken care not to provoke persecution to follow them, by continuing to proclaim the same truths that provoked it in the first instance.

That the apostles were not also exiled is a very remarkable fact: they continued in Jerusalem, to found and organize the infant Church; and it is marvellous that the hand of persecution was not permitted to touch them. Why this should be we cannot tell; but so it pleased the great Head of the Church. Bp. Pearce justly suspects those accounts, in Eusebius and others, that state that the apostles went very shortly after Christ's ascension into different countries, preaching and founding Churches. He thinks this is inconsistent with the various intimations we have of the continuance of the apostles in Jerusalem; and refers particularly to the following texts: Acts 8:1, 14, 25; Acts 9:26, 27; 11:1, 2; Acts 12:1-4; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; Acts 21:17, 18; Galatians 1:17-19; 2:1, 9. The Church at Jerusalem was the first CHRISTIAN Church; and consequently, the boast of the Church of Rome is vain and unfounded. From this time a new aera of the Church arose. Hitherto the apostles and disciples confined their labors among their countrymen in Jerusalem. Now persecution drove the latter into different parts of Judea, and through Samaria; and those who had received the doctrine of Christ at the pentecost, who had come up to Jerusalem from different countries to be present at the feast, would naturally return, especially at the commencement of the persecution, to their respective countries, and proclaim to their countrymen the Gospel of the grace of God. To effect this grand purpose, the Spirit was poured out at the day of pentecost; that the multitudes from different quarters, partaking of the

word of life, might carry it back to the different nations among whom they had their residence. One of the fathers has well observed, that “these holy fugitives were like so many lamps, lighted by the fire of the Holy Spirit, spreading every where the sacred flame by which they themselves had been illuminated.”

**Verse 2. *Devout men carried Stephen to his burial***— The Greek word, *συνεκομισαν*, signifies not only to carry, or rather to gather up, but also to do every thing necessary for the interment of the dead. Among the Jews, and indeed among most nations of the earth, it was esteemed a work of piety, charity, and mercy, to bury the dead. The Jews did not bury those who were condemned by the Sanhedrin in the burying place of the fathers, as they would not bury the guilty with the innocent; and they had a separate place for those who were stoned, and for those that were burnt. According to the Tract Sanh. fol. 45, 46, the stone wherewith any one was stoned, the post on which he was hanged, the sword by which he was beheaded, and the cord by which he was strangled, were buried in the same place with the bodies of the executed persons. As these persons died under the curse of the law, the instruments by which they were put to death were considered as unclean and accursed, and therefore buried with their bodies. Among the ancients, whatever was grateful or useful to a person in life was ordinarily buried with him; thus the sword, spear, shield, etc., of the soldier were put in the same grave; the faithful dog of the hunter, etc., etc. And on this principle the wife of a Brahman burns with the body of her deceased husband.

***Made great lamentation over him.***— This was never done over any condemned by the Sanhedrin—they only bemoaned such privately; this great lamentation over Stephen, if the same custom then prevailed as afterwards, is a proof that Stephen was not condemned by the Sanhedrin; he probably fell a sacrifice to the fury of the bigoted incensed mob, the Sanhedrin not interfering to prevent the illegal execution.

**Verse 3. *Saul made havoc of the Church***— The word *ελυμαινετο*, from *λυμαινω*, to destroy, devastate, ravage, signifies the act of ferocious animals, such as bears, wolves, and the like, in seeking and devouring their prey. This shows with what persevering rancour this man pursued the

harmless Christians; and thus we see in him what bigotry and false zeal are capable of performing.

***Entering into every house***— For, however it might be to others, a Christian man's house was not his castle.

***Haling men and women***— Neither sparing age nor sex in the professors of Christianity. The word **συρῶν** signifies dragging them before the magistrates, or dragging them to justice.

***Committed them to prison.***— For, as the Romans alone had the power of life and death, the Sanhedrin, by whom Saul was employed, Acts 26:10, could do no more than arrest and imprison, in order to inflict any punishment short of death. It is true, St. Paul himself says that some of them were put to death, see Acts 26:10; but this was either done by Roman authority, or by what was called the judgment of zeal, i.e. when the mob took the execution of the laws into their own hands, and massacred those whom they pretended to be blasphemers of God: for these sanctified their murderous outrage under the specious name of zeal for God's glory, and quoted the ensample of Phineas as a precedent. Such persons as these formed a sect among the Jews; and are known in ecclesiastical history by the appellation of Zealots or Sicarii.

**Verse 4. *They that were scattered-went every where preaching***— Thus the very means devised by Satan to destroy the Church became the very instruments of its diffusion and establishment. What are counsel, or might, or cunning, or rage, or malice, against the Lord, whether they are excited by men or devils!

**Verse 5. *Then Philip***— One of the seven deacons, Acts 6:5, called afterwards, Philip the Evangelist, Acts 21:8.

***The city of Samaria***— At this time there was no city of Samaria existing: according to Josephus, Ant. lib. xiii. cap. 10, sect. 3, Hyrcanus had so utterly demolished it as to leave no vestige of it remaining. Herod the Great did afterwards build a city on the same spot of ground; but he called it **σεβαστη** i.e. Augusta, in compliment to the Emperor Augustus, as Josephus tells us, Ant. lib. xv. cap. 8, sect. 5; War, lib. i. cap. 2. sect. 7; and by this name of SebastḶ, or Augusta, that city, if meant here, would in all probability have been called, in the same manner as the town called

Strato's Tower, (which Herod built on the sea coasts, and to which he gave the name of Caesarea, in compliment to Augustus Caesar,) is always called Caesarea, wherever it is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Bp. Pearce.

As Sychem was the very heart and seat of the Samaritan religion, and Mount Gerizim the cathedral church of that sect, it is more likely that it should be intended than any other. See Lightfoot. As the Samaritans received the same law with the Jews, as they also expected the Messiah, as Christ had preached to and converted many of that people, John 4:39-42, it was very reasonable that the earliest offers of salvation should be made to them, before any attempt was made to evangelize the Gentiles. The Samaritans, indeed, formed the connecting link between the Jews and the Gentiles; for they were a mongrel people, made up of both sorts, and holding both Jewish and Pagan rites. See the account of them on Matthew 10:5.

**Verse 6.** *The people with one accord gave heed*— He had fixed their attention, not only with the gravity and importance of the matter of his preaching, but also by the miracles which he did.

**Verse 7.** *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed*— Hence it is evident that these unclean spirits were not a species of diseases; as they are here distinguished from the paralytic and the lame. There is nothing more certain than that the New Testament writers mean real diabolic possessions by the terms unclean spirits, devils, etc., which they use. It is absolute trifling to deny it. If we, in our superior sagacity can show that they were mistaken, that is quite a different matter!

**Verse 8.** *There was great joy in that city.*— No wonder, when they heard such glorious truths, and were the subjects of such beneficent miracles.

**Verse 9.** *A certain man called Simon*— In ancient ecclesiastical writers, we have the strangest account of this man; they say that he pretended to be the Father, who gave the law to Moses; that he came in the reign of Tiberius in the person of the Son; that he descended on the apostles on the day of pentecost, in flames of fire, in quality of the Holy Spirit; that he was the Messiah, the Paraclete, and Jupiter; that the woman who accompanied him, called Helena, was Minerva, or the first intelligence;

with many other extravagancies which probably never had an existence. All that we know to be certain on this subject is, that he used sorcery, that he bewitched the people, and that he gave out himself to be some great one.

This might be sufficient, were not men prone to be wise above what is written.

Our word sorcerer, from the French sorcier, which, from the Latin sors, a lot, signifies the using of lots to draw presages concerning the future; a custom that prevailed in all countries, and was practised with a great variety of forms. On the word lot see the note, Leviticus 16:8, 9; and Joshua 14:2.

The Greek word, **μαγευων**, signifies practising the rites or science of the Magi, or (Persic) Mughan, the worshippers of fire among the Persians; the same as (Arabic) Majoos, and (Arabic) Majooseean, from which we have our word magician. See the note on Matthew 2:1.

**And bewitched the people of Samaria**— **εξιστων**, Astonishing, amazing, or confounding the judgment of the people, from **εξιστημι**, to remove out of a place or state, to be transported beyond one's self, to be out of one's wits; a word that expresses precisely the same effect which the tricks or legerdemain of a juggler produce in the minds of the common people who behold his feats. It is very likely that Simon was a man of this cast, for the east has always abounded in persons of this sort. The Persian, Arabian, Hindoo, and Chinese jugglers are notorious to the present day; and even while I write this, (July, 1813,) three Indian jugglers, lately arrived, are astonishing the people of London; and if such persons can now interest and amaze the people of a city so cultivated and enlightened, what might not such do among the grosser people of Sychem or Sebaste, eighteen hundred years ago?

**That himself was some great one.**— That the feats which he performed sufficiently proved that he possessed a most powerful supernatural agency, and could do whatsoever he pleased.

**Verse 10. This man is the great power of God.**— That is, he is invested with it, and can command and use it. They certainly did not believe him to be God; but they thought him to be endued with a great supernatural power.

There is a remarkable reading here in several MSS. which should not pass unnoticed. In ABCDE, several others, together with the Aethiopic, Armenian, later Syriac, Vulgate, Itala, Origen, and Irenaeus, the word **καλουμενη** is added before **μεγαλη**, and the passage reads thus, This person is that power of God which is CALLED the GREAT. This appears to be the true reading; but what the Samaritans meant by that power of God which they termed the Great, we know not. Simon endeavored to persuade the people that he was a very great personage, and he succeeded.

**Verse 12. *But when they believed Philip***— So it is evident that Philip's word came with greater power than that of Simon; and that his miracles stood the test in such a way as the feats of Simon could not.

**Verse 13. *Simon himself believed also***— He was struck with the doctrine and miracles of Philip—he saw that these were real; he knew his own to be fictitious. He believed therefore that Jesus was the Messiah, and was in consequence baptized.

***Continued with Philip, and wondered***— **εξιστατο**, He was as much astonished and confounded at the miracles of Philip as the people of Samaria were at his legerdemain. It is worthy of remark that **εξιστατο** comes from the same root, **εξιστημι**, as the word **εξιστων**, in Acts 8:9, and, if our translation bewitched be proper there, it should be retained here; and then we should read, Then Simon himself believed and was baptized, and continued with Philip, being BEWITCHED, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. We may see, from this circumstance, how improper the term bewitched is, in the 9th and 11th verses. {Acts 8:9,11 }

**Verse 14. *The word of God***— The doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ.

***They sent unto them Peter and John***— There was no individual ruler among the apostles—there was not even a president of the council; and Peter, far from being chief of the apostles, is one of those sent, with the same commission and authority as John, to confirm the Samaritans in the faith.

**Verse 15. *When they were come down***— The very same mode of speaking, in reference to Jerusalem formerly, obtains now in reference to London. The metropolis in both cases is considered as the centre; and all

parts, in every direction, no matter how distant, or how situated, are represented as below the metropolis. Hence we so frequently hear of persons going up to Jerusalem: and going down from the same. So in London the people speak of going down to the country; and, in the country, of going up to London. It is necessary to make this remark, lest any person should be led away with the notion that Jerusalem was situated on the highest ground in Palestine. It is a mode of speech which is used to designate a royal or imperial city.

***Prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.***— It seems evident from this case, that even the most holy deacons, though full of the Holy Ghost themselves, could not confer this heavenly gift on others. This was the prerogative of the apostles, and they were only instruments; but they were those alone by which the Lord chose to work. They prayed and laid their hands on the disciples, and God sent down the gift; so, the blessing came from God by the apostles, and not from the apostles to the people. But for what purpose was the Holy Spirit thus given? Certainly not for the sanctification of the souls of the people: this they had on believing in Christ Jesus; and this the apostles never dispensed. It was the miraculous gifts of the Spirit which were thus communicated: the speaking with different tongues, and those extraordinary qualifications which were necessary for the successful preaching of the Gospel; and doubtless many, if not all, of those on whom the apostles laid their hands, were employed more or less in the public work of the Church.

**Verse 17. *Then laid they their hands on them***— Probably only on some select persons, who were thought proper for public use in the Church. They did not lay hands on all; for certainly no hands in this way were laid on Simon.

**Verse 18. *When Simon saw*, etc.**— By hearing these speak with different tongues and work miracles.

***He offered them money***— Supposing that the dispensing this Spirit belonged to them—that they could give it to whomsoever they pleased; and imagining that, as he saw them to be poor men, they would not object to take money for their gift; and it is probable that he had gained considerably by his juggling, and therefore could afford to spare some, as he hoped to



make it all up by the profit which he expected to derive from this new influence.

**Verse 20. *Thy money perish with thee***— This is an awful declaration; and imports thus much, that if he did not repent, he and his ill-gotten goods would perish together; his money should be dissipated, and his soul go into perdition.

***That the gift of God may be purchased***— Peter takes care to inform not only Simon, but all to whom these presents may come, that the Spirit of God is the gift of God alone, and consequently cannot be purchased with money; for what reward can HE receive from his creatures, to whom the silver and the gold belong, the cattle on a thousand hills, the earth and its fullness!

**Verse 21. *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter***— Thou hast no part among the faithful, and no lot in this ministry. That the word κληρος, which we translate lot, is to be understood as implying a spiritual portion, office, etc., see proved in the note on Numbers 26:55.

***Thy heart is not right***— It is not through motives of purity, benevolence, or love to the souls of men, that thou desirest to be enabled to confer the Holy Ghost; it is through pride, vain glory, and love of money: thou wouldest now give a little money that thou mightest, by thy new gift, gain much.

**Verse 22. *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness***— St. Peter did not suppose his case to be utterly hopeless; though his sin, considered in its motives and objects, was of the most heinous kind.

***If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee***.— His sin, as yet, only existed in thought and purpose; and therefore it is said, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven.

**Verse 23. *The gall of bitterness***— A Hebraism for excessive bitterness: gall, wormwood, and such like, were used to express the dreadful effects of sin in the soul; the bitter repentance, bitter regret, bitter sufferings, bitter death, etc., etc., which it produces. In Deuteronomy 29:18, idolatry and its consequences are expressed, by having among them a root that beareth GALL and WORMWOOD. And in Hebrews 12:15, some grievous sin is

intended, when the apostle warns them, lest any root of BITTERNESS springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

**Bond of iniquity.**— An allusion to the mode in which the Romans secured their prisoners, chaining the right hand of the prisoner to the left hand of the soldier who guarded him; as if the apostle had said, Thou art tied and bound by the chain of thy sin; justice hath laid hold upon thee, and thou hast only a short respite before thy execution, to see if thou wilt repent.

**Verse 24. Pray ye to the Lord for me**— The words of Peter certainly made a deep impression on Simon's mind; and he must have had a high opinion of the apostle's sanctity and influence with God, when he thus commended himself to their prayers. And we may hope well of his repentance and salvation, if the reading of the Codex Bezae, and the margin of the later Syriac may be relied on: Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none (ΤΟΥΤΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΚΑΚΩΝ) OF ALL THOSE EVILS which ye have spoken (ΜΟΙ) TO ME, may come upon me: (ὅς πολλὰ κλαίων οὐ διελιμπάνεν) WHO WEPT GREATLY, and DID NOT CEASE. That is, he was an incessant penitent. However favourably this or any other MS. may speak of Simon, he is generally supposed to have "grown worse and worse, opposing the apostles and the Christian doctrine, and deceiving many cities and provinces by magical operations; till being at Rome, in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, he boasted that he could fly, and when exhibiting before the emperor and the senate, St. Peter and St. Paul being present, who knew that his flying was occasioned by magic, prayed to God that the people might be undeceived, and that his power might fail; in consequence of which he came tumbling down, and died soon after of his bruises." This account comes in a most questionable shape, and has no evidence which can challenge our assent. To me, it and the rest of the things spoken of Simon the sorcerer appear utterly unworthy of credit. Calmet makes a general collection of what is to be found in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian; Eusebius, Theodoret, Augustine, and others, on the subject of Simon Magus; and to him, if the reader think it worth the pains, he may refer. The substance of these accounts is given above, and in the note on Acts 8:9; and to say the least of them they are all very dubious. The tale of his having an altar erected to him at Rome, with the inscription, Simoni sancto deo, "To the holy god Simon," has been founded on an utter

mistake, and has been long ago sufficiently confuted. See the inscriptions in Gruter, vol. i. p. 96, inscript. No. 5, 6, 7.

**Verse 25. *And they, when they had-preached-returned to Jerusalem***— That is, Peter and John returned, after they had borne testimony to and confirmed the work which Philip had wrought.

**Verse 26. *Arise, and go toward the south***— How circumstantially particular are these directions! Every thing is so precisely marked that there is no danger of the apostle missing his way. He is to perform some great duty; but what, he is not informed. The road which he is to take is marked out; but what he is to do in that road, or how far he is to proceed, he is not told! It is GOD who employs him, and requires of him implicit obedience. If he do his will, according to the present direction, he shall know, by the issue, that God hath sent him on an errand worthy of his wisdom and goodness. We have a similar instance of circumstantial direction from God in Acts 9:11: Arise, go into the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus, etc. And another instance, still more particular, in Acts 10:5, 6: Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. God never sends any man on a message, without giving him such directions as shall prevent all mistakes and miscarriages, if simply and implicitly followed. This is also strictly true of the doctrines contained in his word: no soul ever missed salvation that simply followed the directions given in the word of God. Those who will refine upon every thing, question the Divine testimony, and dispute with their Maker, cannot be saved. And how many of this stamp are found, even among Christians, professing strict godliness!

***Gaza, which is desert.***— *αυτη εστιν ερημος*, This it the desert, or this is in the desert. Gaza was a town about two miles and a half from the sea-side; it was the last town which a traveler passed through, when he went from Phoenicia to Egypt, and was at the entrance into a wilderness, according to the account given by Arrian in Exped. Alex. lib. ii. cap. 26, p. 102. [Ed. Gronov.]

That it was the last inhabited town, as a man goes from Phoenicia to Egypt, **ἐπι τη αρχη της ερημου**, on the commencement of the desert. See Bp. Pearce.

Dr. Lightfoot supposes that the word desert is added here, because at that time the ancient Gaza was actually desert, having been destroyed by Alexander, and **μενουσα ερημος**, remaining desert, as Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 1102, says; and that the angel mentioned this desert Gaza to distinguish it from another city of the same name, in the tribe of Ephraim, not far from the place where Philip now was. On this we may observe that, although Gaza was desolated by Alexander the Great, as were several other cities, yet it was afterwards rebuilt by Gabinius. See Josephus, Ant. lib. xv. cap. 5, sect. 3. And writers of the first century represent it as being flourishing and populous in their times. See Wetstein.

Schoettgen thinks that **ερημος**, desert, should be referred, not to Gaza, but to **οδος**, the way; and that it signifies a road that was less frequented. If there were two roads to Gaza from Jerusalem, as some have imagined, (see Rosenmuller,) the eunuch might have chosen that which was desert, or less frequented, for the sake of privacy in his journeying religious exercises.

**Verse 27. A man of Ethiopia**— **ανηρ αιθιοψ** should be translated an Ethiopian, for the reasons given on Acts 7:2.

**An eunuch**— See this word interpreted, on Matthew 19:12. The term eunuch was given to persons in authority at court, to whom its literal meaning did not apply. Potiphar was probably an eunuch only as to his office; for he was a married man. See Genesis 37:36; 39:1. And it is likely that this Ethiopian was of the same sort.

**Of great authority**— **δυναστης**, A perfect lord chamberlain of the royal household; or, rather, her treasurer, for it is here said, he had charge of all her treasure, **ην επι πασης της γαζης αυτης**. The apparent Greek word **γαζα**, Gaza, is generally allowed to be Persian, from the authority of Servius, who, in his comment on AEn. lib. i. ver. 118: —

*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto,  
Arma virum, tabulaeque, et Troia GAZA per undas.*

*“And here and there above the waves are seen  
Arms, pictures, precious goods, and floating men.”*

*DRYDEN.*

The words of Servius are: “Gaza Persicus sermo est, et significat divitias; unde Gaza urbs in Palaestina dicitur, quod in ea Cambyses rex Persarum cum Aegyptiis bellum inferret divitias suas condidit.” GAZA is a Persian word, and signifies RICHES: hence Gaza, a city in Palestine, was so called because Cambyses, king of Persia, laid up his treasures in it, when he waged war with the Egyptians. The nearest Persian word of this signification which I find is (Persian) gunj, or ganz, and (Persian) gunja, which signify a magazine, store, hoard, or hidden treasure. The Arabic (Arabic) kluzaneh, comes as near as the Persian, with the same meaning. Hence (Arabic) makhzen, called magazen by the Spaniards, and magazine by the English; a word which signifies a collection of stores or treasures, or the place where they are laid up. It is scarcely necessary to remark that this name is given also to certain monthly publications, which are, or profess to be, a store of treasures, or repository of precious, or valuable things.

But who was Candace? It is granted that she is not found in the common lists of Ethiopic sovereigns with which we have been favored. But neither the Abyssinians nor the Jews admitted women in their genealogies. I shall not enter into this controversy, but shall content myself with quoting the words of Mr. Bruce. “It is known,” says he, “from credible writers engaged in no controversy, that this Candace reigned upon the Nile in Atbara, near Egypt. Her capital also, was taken in the time of Augustus, a few years before the conversion of the slave by Philip; and we shall have occasion often to mention her successors and her kingdom, as existing in the reign of the Abyssinian kings, long after the Mohammedan conquest: they existed when I passed through Atbara, and do undoubtedly exist there to this day.”-Bruce’s Travels, vol. ii. p. 431.

It does not appear, as some have imagined, that the Abyssinians were converted to the Christian faith by this eunuch, nor by any of the apostles; as there is strong historic evidence that they continued Jews and Pagans

for more than three hundred years after the Christian aera. Their conversion is with great probability attributed to Frumentius, sent to Abyssinia for that purpose by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, about A.D. 330. See Bruce as above.

The Ethiopians mentioned here are those who inhabited the isle or peninsula of Meroe, above and southward of Egypt. It is the district which Mr. Bruce calls Atbara, and which he proves formerly bore the name of Meroe. This place, according to Diodorus Siculus, had its name from Meroe, daughter of Cambyses, king of Persia, who died there in the expedition which her father undertook against the Ethiopians. Strabo mentions a queen in this very district named Candace: his words are remarkable. Speaking of an insurrection of the Ethiopians against the Romans he says: *τουτων δ' ησαν και οι βασιλισσης στρατηγοι της κανδακης, η καθ' ημας ηρξε των αιθιοπων, ανδρικη τις γυνη, πεπηρωνη τον οφθαλμον*, “Among these were the officers of Queen CANDACE, who in our days reigned over the Ethiopians. She was a masculine woman, and blind of one eye.” Though this could not have been the Candace mentioned in the text, it being a little before the Christian aera, yet it establishes the fact that a queen of this name did reign in this place; and we learn from others that it was a common name to the queens of Ethiopia. Pliny, giving an account of the report made by Nero’s messengers, who were sent to examine this country, says, *AEdificia oppidi (Meroes) pauca: regnare faeminam CANDACEN; quod nomen multis jam annis ad reginas transiit. Hist. Nat. lib. vi. cap. 29, ad fin.* They reported that “the edifices of the city were few: that a woman reigned there of the name of Candace; which name had passed to their queens, successively, for many years.” To one of those queens the eunuch in the text belonged; and the above is sufficient authority to prove that queens of this name reigned over this part of Ethiopia.

***Had come to Jerusalem for to worship***— Which is a proof that he was a worshipper of the God of Israel; but how came he acquainted with the Jewish religion? Let us, for a little, examine this question. In 1 Kings 10:1, etc., we have the account of the visit paid to Solomon by the queen of Sheba, the person to whom our Lord refers, Matthew 12:42, and Luke 11:31. It has been long credited by the Abyssinians that this queen, who by some is called Balkis, by others Maqueda, was not only instructed by

Solomon in the Jewish religion, but also established it in her own empire on her return; that she had a son by Solomon named Menilek, who succeeded her in the kingdom; and, from that time till the present, they have preserved the Jewish religion. Mr. Bruce throws some light upon this subject: the substance of what he says is the following: “There can be no doubt of the expedition of the queen of Sheba; as Pagan, Moor, Arab, Abyssinian, and all the countries round, vouch for it, nearly in the terms of Scripture. Our Savior calls her queen of the south; and she is called, in 1 Kings 10:1, etc., 2 Chronicles 9:1, etc., queen of Sheba or Saba; for Saba, Azab, and Azaba, all signify the south: and she is said to have come from the uttermost parts of the earth. In our Saviour’s time the boundaries of the known land, southward, were Raptam or Prassum; which were the uttermost parts of the known earth, and were with great propriety so styled by our Lord. The gold, myrrh, cassia, and frankincense, which she brought with her, are all products of that country. The annals of the Abyssinians state that she was a pagan when she left Saba or Azab, to visit Solomon; and that she was there converted and had a son by Solomon, who succeeded her in the kingdom, as stated above. All the inhabitants of this country, whether Jews or Christians, believe this; and, farther, that the 45th Psalm {Psalm 45:1, etc.} was a prophecy of her journey to Jerusalem; that she was accompanied by a daughter of Hiram from Tyre; and that the latter part of the Psalm is a prophecy of her having a son by Solomon, and of his ruling over the Gentiles.” Travels, vol. ii. page 395, etc. All this being granted, and especially the Scripture fact of the queen of Sheba’s visit, and the great probability, supported by uninterrupted tradition, that she established the Jewish religion in her dominions on her return, we may at once see that the eunuch in question was a descendant of those Jews; or that he was a proselyte in his own country to the Jewish faith, and was now come up at the great feast to worship God at Jerusalem. Mr. Bruce may be right; but some think that Saba, in Arabia Felix, is meant: see the note on Matthew 12:42.

**Verse 28.** *Sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.*— He had gone to Jerusalem to worship: he had profited by his religious exercises: and even in travelling, he is improving his time. God sees his simplicity and earnestness, and provides him an instructor, who should lead him into the great truths of the Gospel, which, without such a one, he could not have

understood. Many, after having done their duty, as they call it, in attending a place of worship, forget the errand that brought them thither, and spend their time, on their return, rather in idle conversation than in reading or conversing about the word of God. It is no wonder that such should be always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

**Verse 29. *Then the Spirit said unto Philip***— This holy man having obeyed the first direction he received from God, and gone southward without knowing the reason why, it was requisite that he should now be informed of the object of his mission: the Spirit said unto him, go near, and join thyself, etc. The angel who had given him the first direction had departed; and the influence of the Holy Spirit now completed the information. It is likely that what the Spirit did in this case was by a strong impression on his mind, which left him no doubt of its being from God.

**Verse 30. *Heard him read the Prophet Esaias***— The eunuch, it seems, was reading aloud, and apparently in Greek, for that was the common language in Egypt; and, indeed, almost in every place it was understood. And it appears that it was the Greek version of the Septuagint that he was reading, as the quotation below is from that version.

**Verse 31. *How can I, except some man should guide me?***— This is no proof that “the Scriptures cannot be understood without an authorized interpreter,” as some of the papistical writers assert. How could the eunuch know any thing of the Gospel dispensation, to which this scripture referred? That dispensation had not yet been proclaimed to him; he knew nothing about Jesus. But where that dispensation has been published, where the four Gospels and the apostolic epistles are at hand, every thing relative to the salvation of the soul may be clearly apprehended by any simple, upright person. There are difficulties, it is true, in different parts of the sacred writings, which neither the pope nor his conclave can solve; and several which even the more enlightened Protestant cannot remove; but these difficulties do not refer to matters in which the salvation of the soul is immediately concerned: they refer to such as are common to every ancient author in the universe. These difficulties, being understood, add to the beauty, elegance, and justness of the language, thoughts, and turns of



expression; and these, only the few who are capable of understanding are able to relish. As to all the rest, all that relates to faith and practice, all in which the present and eternal interest of the soul is concerned, “the wayfaring man, though a fool, (quite illiterate,) shall not err therein.”

***That he would come up, and sit with him.***— So earnestly desirous was he to receive instruction relative to those things which concerned the welfare of his soul.

**Verse 32. *The place of the scripture***— **περιοχη της γραφης**, The section, or paragraph.

**Verse 33. *In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away***— He who was the fountain of judgment and justice had no justice shown him (mercy he needed not) in his humiliation; viz. that time in which he emptied himself, and appeared in the form of a servant.

***Who shall declare his generation***— **την γενεαν αυτου**: Answering to the Hebrew דֹרֹר doro, which Bp. Lowth understands as implying his manner of life. It was the custom among the Jews, when they were taking away any criminal from judgment to execution, to call out and inquire whether there was any person who could appear in behalf of the character of the criminal—whether there was any who, from intimate acquaintance with his manner of life, could say any thing in his favor? This circumstance I have noticed before, and it has been particularly remarked in the case of Stephen: see at Acts 7:60. In our Lord’s case, this benevolent inquiry does not appear to have been made; and perhaps to this breach of justice, as well as of custom, the prophet refers; and this shows how minutely the conduct of those bad men was known seven hundred years before it took place. God can foreknow what he pleases, and can do what he pleases; and all the operations of his infinite mind are just and right. Some think that, who shall declare his generation? refers to his eternal Sonship; others, to his miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin; others, to the multitudinous progeny of spiritual children which should be born unto God, in consequence of his passion and meritorious death. Perhaps the first, which refers to the usual custom in behalf of the criminal, is the best and most natural sense.

**Verse 34. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this***— This was a very natural inquiry: for in the test itself, and in its circumstances, there was nothing that could determine the meaning, so as to ascertain whether the prophet meant himself or some other person; and the very inquiry shows that the eunuch had thought deeply on the subject.

**Verse 35. *Began at the same scripture***— He did not confine himself to this one scripture, but made this his text, and showed, from the general tenor of the sacred writings, that Jesus was the Christ, or Messiah; and that in his person, birth, life, doctrine, miracles, passion, death, and resurrection, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled. This preaching had the desired effect, for the eunuch was convinced of the truth of Philip's doctrine, and desired to be baptized in the name of Jesus.

**Verse 36. *See, here is water***— He was not willing to omit the first opportunity that presented itself of his taking upon himself the profession of the Gospel. By this we may see that Philip had explained the whole of the Christian faith to him, and the way by which believers were brought into the Christian Church.

**Verse 37. *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.***— He believed that Jesus, whom Philip preached to him, was THE CHRIST or Messiah, and consequently the Son of God.

This whole verse is omitted by ABCG, several others of the first authority, Erpen's edit. of the Arabic, the Syriac, the Coptic, Sahidic, Aethiopic, and some of the Slavonic: almost all the critics declare against it as spurious. Griesbach has left it out of the text; and Professor White in his Criseus says, "Hic versus certissime delendus," this verse, most assuredly, should be blotted out. It is found in E, several others of minor importance, and in the Vulgate and Arabic. In those MSS. where it is extant it exists in a variety of forms, though the sense is the same.

**Verse 38. *And they went down***— They alighted from the chariot into the water. While Philip was instructing him, and he professed his faith in Christ, he probably plunged himself under the water, as this was the plan which appears to have been generally followed among the Jews in their baptisms; but the person who had received his confession of faith was he

to whom the baptism was attributed, as it was administered by his authority.

**Verse 39. *The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip***— Perhaps this means no more than that the Holy Spirit suggested to the mind of Philip that he should withdraw abruptly from the eunuch, and thus leave him to pursue his journey, reflecting on the important incidents which had taken place. Some suppose that the angel of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord, are the same person throughout this chapter. There is a remarkable reading in the Codex Alexandrinus which exists thus in two lines: —

π ν α α γ ι ο ν ε π ε π ε χ ε ν ε π ι τ ο ν ε υ ν ο υ ξ ο ν

*The Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch:*

α γ γ ε λ ο χ δ ε κ υ η ρ π α χ ε ν τ ο ν φ ι λ ι π π ο ν .

*But the angel of the Lord snatched away Philip.*

This reading is found in several other MSS. and in some versions. Many think that the Spirit or angel of God carried off Philip in some such manner as the Apocrypha represents the transportation of Habakkuk, who was taken up by the hair of the head, and carried from Judea to Babylon! For such an interposition there was no need. When Philip had baptized the eunuch, the Spirit of God showed him that it was not the will of God that he should accompany the eunuch to Meroe, but, on the contrary, that he should hasten away to Ashdod; as God had in that, and the neighboring places, work sufficient to employ him in.

**Verse 40. *Philip was found at Azotus***— From the time he left the eunuch, he was not heard of till he got to Azotus, which, according to Dr. Lightfoot, was about 34 miles from Gaza, and probably it was near Gaze that Philip met the eunuch. The Azotus of the New Testament is the Ashdod of the old. It was given by Joshua to the tribe of Judah, Joshua 15:47. It was one of the five lordships which belonged to the Philistines, and is a seaport town on the Mediterranean Sea, between Gaza on the south, and Joppa or Jaffa on the north. Herodotus reports, lib. ii. cap. 157, that Psammeticus, king of Egypt, besieged this city 29 years, which, if true, is the longest siege which any city or fortress ever endured.

*Preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.*— This was Caesarea in Palestine, formerly called Strato's Tower, built by Herod the Great in honor of Augustus. There was an excellent harbour here made by Herod; and, after the destruction of Jerusalem, it became the capital of the whole land of Judea. It must be always distinguished from Caesarea Philippi, which was an inland town not far from the springs of Jordan. Whenever the word Caesarea occurs without Philippi, the former is intended. As Philip preached in all the cities of Palestine till he came to Caesarea, he must have preached in the different cities of the Philistine country, Ashdod, Akkaron, and Jamnia, and also in the principal parts of Samaria, as these lay in his way from Gaza to Caesarea. As there was a readier disposition to receive the word in those places, the Spirit of the Lord, under whose guidance he acted, did not suffer him to accompany the eunuch to Abyssinia. It appears, from Acts 21:8, that Philip settled at Caesarea, where he had a house and family, four of his unmarried daughters being prophetesses. It is likely that his itinerant mission ended here; though he continued occasionally to perform the work of an evangelist, and to bring up his family in the knowledge and fear of God, which is the most imperious duty that any master of a family can be called on to perform, and which it is impossible for any man to accomplish by substitute; and which none can neglect without endangering his own salvation.

## CHAPTER 9.

*Saul, bent on the destruction of the Christians, obtains letters from the high priest, authorizing him to seize those whom he should find at Damascus, and bring them bound to Jerusalem, 1, 2. On his way to Damascus, he has a Divine vision, is convinced of his sin and folly, is struck blind, and remains three days without sight, and neither eats nor drinks, 3-9. Ananias, a disciple, is commanded in a vision to go and speak to Saul, and restore his sight, 10-16. Ananias goes and lays his hands on him, and he receives his sight, and is baptized, 17-19. Saul, having spent a few days with the Christians at Damascus, goes to the synagogues, proclaims Christ, and confounds the Jews, 20-22. The Jews lay wait to kill him, but the disciples let him down over the walls of the city in a basket, by night, and he escapes to Jerusalem, 23-25. Having wished to associate with the disciples there, they avoid him; but Barnabas takes and brings him to the apostles, and declares his conversion, 26, 27. He continues in Jerusalem preaching Christ, and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews, who endeavor to slay him; but the disciples take him to Caesarea, and send him thence to his own city Tarsus, 28-30. About this time, the Churches, being freed from persecution, are edified and multiplied, 31. Peter heals Eneas at Lydda, who had been afflicted with the palsy eight years: in consequence of which miracle, all the people of Lydda and Saron are converted, 32-35. Account of the sickness and death of a Christian woman named Tabitha, who dwelt at Joppa; and her miraculous restoration to life by the ministry of Peter, 36-41. Gracious effects produced among the inhabitants of Lydda by this miracle, 42, 43.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9.

**Verse 1.** *Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter*— The original text is very emphatic, *ετι εμπνεων απειλης και φονου*, and points out how determinate Saul was to pursue and accomplish his fell purpose of totally destroying the infant Church of Christ. The mode of speech introduced above is very frequent in the Greek writers, who often

express any vehement and hostile affection of the mind by the verb *πνεειν*, to breathe, to pant; so Theocritus, Idyll. xxii. ver. 82:

*εξ μεσσον συναγον, φονον αλλαλοισι πνεοντες.*

They came into the assembly, breathing mutual slaughter.

Euripides has the same form, *πυρ πνεουσα και φονον*, breathing out fire, and slaughter, Iphig. in Taur.

And Aristophanes more fully, referring to all the preparations for war: —

*αλλα πνεοντας δορυ και λογχας και λευκολοφους τρυφαλειας,  
και πηληκας, και κνημιδας, και θυμους επταβοειους.*

*They breathed spears, and pikes, and helmets, and  
crests, and greaves, and the fury of redoubted heroes.*

The figure is a favourite one with Homer: hence *μενεα πνειοντες αβαντες*, the Abantes breathing strength.—Il. ii. 536. And how frequently he speaks of his fierce countrymen as, *μενεα πνειοντες αχαιοι*, the Greeks breathing strength, see Il. iii. 8; xi. 508; xxiv. 364, which phrase an old Scholiast interprets, being filled with strength and fury. St. Luke, who was master of the Greek tongue, chose such terms as best expressed a heart desperately and incessantly bent on accomplishing the destruction of the objects of its resentment. Such at this time was the heart of Saul of Tarsus; and it had already given full proof of its malignity, not only in the martyrdom of Stephen, but also in making havoc of the Church, and in forcibly entering every house, and dragging men and women, whom he suspected of Christianity, and committing them to prison. See Acts 8:3.

***Went unto the high priest***— As the high priest was chief in all matters of an ecclesiastical nature, and the present business was pretendedly religious, he was the proper person to apply to for letters by which this virulent persecutor might be accredited. The letters must necessarily be granted in the name of the whole Sanhedrin, of which Gamaliel, Saul's master, was at that time the head; but the high priest was the proper organ through whom this business might be negotiated.

**Verse 2. *Letters to Damascus to the synagogues***— Damascus, anciently called דַמַסְקִיּוֹס Damask, and דַרְמַסְקִיּוֹס Darmask, was once the metropolis of all Syria. It was situated at fifty miles' distance from the sea; from which it is separated by lofty mountains. It is washed by two rivers, Amara or Abara, which ran through it, and Pharpar, called by the Greeks Chrysorrhoeas, the golden stream, which ran on the outside of its walls. It is one of the most ancient cities in the world, for it existed in the time of Abraham, Genesis 14:15; and how long before is not known. The city of Damascus is at present a place of considerable trade, owing to its being the rendezvous for all the pilgrims from the north of Asia, on their road to and from the temple of Mecca. It is surrounded with pretty strong walls, which have nine gates, and is between four and five miles in circumference. It contains about 100,000 inhabitants, some say more, the principal part of whom are Arabs and Turks, with whom live, in a state of considerable degradation, about 15,000 Christians. Damascus, like other places of importance, has passed through the hands of many masters. It was captured and ruined by Tiglath Pileser, who carried away its inhabitants to Kin, beyond the Euphrates, about 740 years before the Christian aera; and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, Isaiah 17:1-3, and that of Amos, Amos 1:4, 5. It was also taken by Sennacherib, and by the generals of Alexander the Great. Metellus and Laelius seized it, during the war of Pompey with Tigranes; before Christ 65. It continued under the dominion of the Romans till the Saracens took possession of it, in A.D. 634. It was besieged and taken by Teemour lenk, A.D. 1400, who put all the inhabitants to the sword. The Egyptian Mamelukes repaired Damascus when they took possession of Syria; but the Turkish Emperor Selim having defeated them at the battle of Aleppo in 1516, Damascus was brought under the government of the Turks, and in their hands it still remains. In the time of St. Paul it was governed by Aretas, whose father, Obodas, had been governor of it under Augustus. Damascus is 112 miles south of Antioch; 130 N.N.E. of Jerusalem; and 270 S.S.W. of Diarbek. Longitude 37° east: latitude 33° 45' north. The fruit tree called the Damascene, vulgarly Damazon, and the flower called the Damask rose, were transplanted from Damascus to the gardens of Europe; and the silks and linens, known by the name of Damasks, were probably first manufactured by the inhabitants of this ancient city.

**Any of this way**— That is, this religion, for so דרך derec in Hebrew, and οδος, hodos, in Hellenistic Greek, are often to be understood. דרך יהוה derec Yehovah, the way of the Lord, implies the whole of the worship due to him, and prescribed by himself: the way or path in which he wills men to walk, that they may get safely through life, and finally attain everlasting felicity. The Jewish writers designate the whole doctrine and practice of Christianity by a similar expression, דרך הנוצרים derec hanotsarim, the way, doctrine, or sect of the Christians.

**Whether they were men or women**— Provided they were Jews; for no converts had as yet been made among the Gentiles; nor did the power of the high priest and Sanhedrin extend to any but those who belonged to the synagogues. Pearce.

In every country where there were Jews and synagogues, the power and authority of the Sanhedrin and high priest were acknowledged: just as papists in all countries acknowledge the authority of the pope. And as there can be but one pope, and one conclave, so there could be but one high priest, and one Sanhedrin; and this is the reason why the high priest and sanhedrin at Jerusalem had authority over all Jews, even in the most distant countries.

**Verse 3. Suddenly there shined round about him**— This might have been an extraordinary flash of the electric fluid, accompanied with thunder, with which God chose to astonish and confound Saul and his company; but so modified it as to prevent it from striking them dead. Thunder would naturally follow such a large quantity of this fluid as appears to have been disengaged at this time; and out of this thunder, or immediately after it, Christ spoke in an awful and distinct voice, which appears to have been understood by Saul only.

**Verse 4. And he fell to the earth**— Being struck down with the lightning: many persons suppose he was on horseback, and painters thus represent him; but this is utterly without foundation. Painters are, in almost every case, wretched commentators.

**Verse 5. Who art thou, Lord?**— τίς εἶ, κυριε; Who art thou, SIR? He had no knowledge who it was that addressed him, and would only use the



term **κυριε**, as any Roman or Greek would, merely as a term of civil respect.

***I am Jesus whom thou persecutest***— “Thy enmity is against me and my religion; and the injuries which thou dost to my followers I consider as done to myself.”

The following words, making twenty in the original, and thirty in our version, are found in no Greek MS. The words are, It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks: and he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and the Lord said unto him. It is not very easy to account for such a large addition, which is not only not found in any Greek MS. yet discovered, but is wanting in the Itala, Erpen’s Arabic, the Syriac, Coptic, Sahidic, and most of the Slavonian. It is found in the Vulgate, one of the Arabic, the AETHiopic, and Armenian; and was probably borrowed from Acts 26:14, and some marginal notes. It is wanting also in the Complutensian edition, and in that of Bengel. Griesbach also leaves it out of the text.

***It is hard for thee***, etc.— **σκληρον σοι προς κεντρα λακτιζειν**. This is a proverbial expression, which exists, not only in substance, but even in so many words, both in the Greek and Latin writers. **κεντρον**, kenton, signifies an ox goad, a piece of pointed iron stuck in the end of a stick, with which the ox is urged on when drawing the plough. The origin of the proverb seems to have been this: sometimes it happens that a restive or stubborn ox kicks back against the goad, and thus wounds himself more deeply: hence it has become a proverb to signify the fruitlessness and absurdity of rebelling against lawful authority, and the getting into greater difficulties by endeavoring to avoid trifling sufferings. So the proverb, Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim. Out of the cauldron into the fire. “Out of bad into worse.” The saying exists, almost in the apostolic form, in the following writers. EURIPIDES, in Bacch. ver. 793: —

θυοιμ’ αν αυτω μαλλον, η θυμουμενος  
προς κεντρα λακτιζοιμι, θνητος ων, θεω.

***“I, who am a frail mortal, should rather sacrifice  
to him who is a GOD, than, by giving place to  
anger, kick against the goads.”***

And AESCHYLUS, in Agamemnon, ver. 1633: —

προς κεντρα μη λακτιζε.

*Kick not against the goads.*

And again in Prometh. Vinct. ver. 323: —

προς κεντρα κωλον εκτενεις, ορων οτι  
τραχυσ μοναρχος ουδ' υπευθυνος κρατει.

*“Thou stretchest out thy foot against goads, seeing  
the fierce monarch governs according to his own will.”*

Resistance is of no use: the more thou dost rebel, the more keenly thou shalt suffer. See the Scholiast here.

PINDAR has a similar expression, Pyth. ii. ver. 171-5 : —

φερειν δ' ελαφρως  
επαυχενιον λαβοντα  
ζυγον γ' αρηγει. ποτι κεντρον δε τοι  
λακτιζεμεν, τελεθει  
ολισθηρος οιμος.

*“It is profitable to bear willingly the assumed yoke.  
To kick against the goad is pernicious conduct.”*

Where see the Scholiast, who shows that “it is ridiculous for a man to fight with fortune: for if the unruly ox, from whom the metaphor is taken, kick against the goad, he shall suffer still more grievously.” TERENCE uses the same figure. Phorm. Act i. scen. 2, ver. 27: —

*Venere in mentem mihi istaec: nam inscitia est,  
Adversum stimulum calces. —*

*“These things have come to my recollection, for it  
is foolishness for thee to kick against a goad.”*

OVID has the same idea in other words, Trist. lib. ii. ver. 15: —

*At nunc (tanta meo comes est insania morbo)  
Saxa malum refero rursus ad icta pedem.  
Scilicet et victus repetit gladiator arenam;  
Et redit in tumidas naufraga puppis aquas.*

*But madly now I wound myself alone,  
 Dashing my injured foot against the stone:  
 So to the wide arena, wild with pain,  
 The vanquish'd gladiator hastes again;  
 So the poor shatter'd bark the tempest braves,  
 Launching once more into the swelling waves.*

Intelligent men, in all countries and in all ages of the world, have seen and acknowledged the folly and wickedness of fighting against God; of murmuring at the dispensations of his providence; of being impatient under affliction; and of opposing the purposes of his justice and mercy. The words contain a universal lesson, and teach us patience under affliction, and subjection to the sovereign will of God; and they especially show the desperate wickedness of endeavoring, by persecution, to hinder the dissemination of the truth of God in the earth. He that kicks against this goad does it at the risk of his final salvation. The fable of the viper and the file is another illustration of this proverb: it gnawed and licked the file, till it destroyed its teeth and wasted away its tongue. The maxim in the proverb should be early inculcated on the minds of children and scholars; when chastised for their faults, resistance and stubbornness produce increased coercion and chastisement. And let parents and masters learn that the oft-repeated use of the goad and ferula seldom tend to reclaim, but beget obduracy and desperation. The advice of Columella to the ploughman, having some relation to the proverb in the text, and a strong bearing on this latter part of the subject, is worthy of the most serious regard: “Voce potius quam verberibus terreat: ultimaque sint opus recusantibus remedia plagae. Nunquam stimulo lacessat juvencum, quod retreçantem calcitrosūque eum reddit: nonnunquam tamen admoneat flagello.” COLUMELLA, Deuteronomy Revelation Rustica, lib. ii. cap. 2, in fine. “Let the husbandman intimidate his oxen more by his voice than by blows, to which he should never have recourse but in extreme cases. A young steer should never be goaded, for this will induce him to kick and run back; but on proper occasions the whip, as an incentive to activity, may be profitably used.” In reference to the same subject, which all concerned should feel to be of the greatest importance I shall close with the advice of one greater than the Roman agriculturist: Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged, Colossians 3:21; but bring them up (εν παιδεια και νουθεσια κυριου) in the discipline and

admonition of the Lord, Ephesians 6:4, using the authority that God has given you with a steady hand, actuated by a tender and feeling heart.

**Verse 6. *Trembling***— Under a strong apprehension of meeting the judgment he deserved.

***And astonished***— At the light, the thunder, and the voice.

***Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?***— The word **κυριε**, Lord, is here to be understood in its proper sense, as expressing authority and dominion: in the 5th verse it appears to be equivalent to our word sir.

The pride of the Pharisee is now brought down to the dust; and the fury of the persecutor is not only restrained, but the lion becomes a lamb. What wilt thou have me to do? Wilt thou condescend to employ me among thy meanest servants?

***Go into the city, and it shall be told thee***, etc.— Jesus could have informed him at once what was his will concerning him; but he chose to make one of those very disciples whom he was going to bring in bonds to Jerusalem the means of his salvation: 1. To show that God will help man by man, that they may learn to love and respect each other. 2. That in the benevolence of Ananias he might see the spirit and tendency of that religion which he was persecuting, and of which he was shortly to become an apostle.

**Verse 7. *Stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man***.— The men were **εννεοι**, stupified, hearing **της φωνης**, the voice or thunder, but not distinguishing the words, which were addressed to Saul alone; and which were spoken out of the thunder, or in a small, still voice, after the peal had ceased. The remarkable case, 1 Kings 19:11-13, may serve to illustrate that before us. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord; and the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lard; and after the wind an earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; and after the fire a still small voice; and when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave, and behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, WHAT DOST THOU HERE, ELIJAH! The thunder must have been heard by all; the small, still voice by Saul alone. This consideration amply reconciles the passage in the text with that in

Acts 22:9, where Paul says, They that were with me saw the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spoke with one. They had heard the thunder which followed the escape of the lightning, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to Saul; they did not hear the words, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, etc.; but they saw and heard enough to convince them that the whole was supernatural; for they were all struck down to the earth with the splendor of the light, and the sound of the thunder, which I suppose took place on this occasion. It has been a question among divines, whether Jesus Christ did really appear to Saul on this occasion. The arguments against the real appearance are not strong. St. Luke tells us that those who were with him heard the voice, but they saw no man; which is a strong intimation that he saw what they did not. Ananias, it seems, was informed that there had been a real appearance, for, in addressing Saul, ver. 17, he says, The Lord Jesus that APPEARED unto THEE in the way as thou camest, etc. And Barnabas intimates thus much, when he brought him before the apostles at Jerusalem, for he declared unto them how he had SEEN the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken unto him; and, Acts 22:14, where the discourse of Ananias is given more at large, he says, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldest know his will, and SEE that JUST ONE, and shouldest HEAR the voice of his mouth; so we find that hearing the voice, or words of his mouth, was not what is called the appearance; for, besides this, there was an actual manifestation of the person of Christ. But St. Paul's own words, 1 Corinthians 9:1, put the subject out of dispute: Amos I not an apostle? Amos I not free? HAVE I NOT SEEN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD? To which may be added, 1 Corinthians 15:8, And last of all, HE WAS SEEN OF ME ALSO, as of one born out of due time.

**Verse 8.** *When his eyes were opened, he saw no man*— Instead of *ουδενα*, no man, the Codex Alexandrinus, the Syriac, Vulgate, and some others, have *ουδεν* nothing. He not only saw no man, but he saw nothing, being quite blind; and therefore was led by the hand to Damascus, *μη βλεπων*, being without sight.

**Verse 9.** *Neither did eat nor drink*.— The anxiety of his mind and the anguish of his heart were so great that he had no appetite for food; and he continued in total darkness and without food for three days, till Ananias proclaimed salvation to him in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**Verse 10. *A certain disciple-named Ananias***— A general opinion has prevailed in the Greek Church that this Ananias was one of the seventy-two disciples, and that he was martyred; and they celebrate his martyrdom on the first of October. It has been farther stated that his house was turned into a church, which remains to the present day, though now occupied as a Turkish mosque; but even the Mohammedans have the tradition, and treat his memory with great respect. However this may be, from Acts 22:12, we learn, what is of more importance, that he was a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there. See on Acts 9:17.

***To him said the Lord in a vision***— *εν οραματι*, In a strong impression made upon his mind, which left no doubt concerning its heavenly origin, nor of the truth of the things represented by it. It is very probable that the whole took place in a dream.

**Verse 11. *Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight***— How very particular is this direction! And it was necessary that it should be so, that he might see the whole to be a Divine communication; the house was probably one in which Saul was accustomed to reside when at Damascus; and where he was known as a native of Tarsus.

Tarsus was a city of Cilicia, seated on the Cydnus, and now called Tarasso. It was, at one period, the capital of all Cilicia, and became a rival to Alexandria and Athens in the arts and sciences. The inhabitants, in the time of Julius Caesar, having shown themselves friendly to the Romans, were endowed with all the privileges of Roman citizens; and it was on this account that St. Paul claimed the rights of a Roman citizen; a circumstance which, on different occasions, was to him, and the cause in which he was engaged, of considerable service.

***Behold, he prayeth***— He is earnestly seeking to know my will, and to find the salvation of his soul; therefore, go speedily, and direct him. Some have laid needless stress on these words, as if they intimated, that “though Saul as a Pharisee had often said his prayers, yet he had never prayed them till now.” This is not correct: he could himself testify that, while he was a Pharisee, he had lived in all good conscience towards God; and consequently, in that time, made many faithful and fervent prayers; but he was praying now for instruction, and his prayers were speedily answered.

**Verse 12. *Hath seen in a vision***— While God prepares Ananias, by a vision, to go and minister to Saul, he at the same time prepares Saul, by another vision, to profit by this ministry.

**Verse 13. *Lord, I have heard by many of this man***— This was all done in a dream, else this sort of reasoning with his Maker would have been intolerable in Ananias. Saul had been a notorious persecutor; many could testify of his outrageous acts against the poor followers of Christ.

***Thy saints***— That is, the Christians, or followers of Christ. ἅγιοι signifies not only holy persons, but also consecrated persons; from α, negative, and γη, the earth; persons who are separated from all earthly uses, and consecrated to the service of God alone.

**Verse 14. *And here he hath authority***, etc.— Ananias had undoubtedly heard of Saul's coming, and the commission he had received from the chief priests; and he was about to urge this as a reason why he should have no connection with so dangerous a man.

**Verse 15. *Go thy way***— He was thus prevented from going farther in his reasoning on this subject.

***He is a chosen vessel unto me***— The word σκευος in Greek, and כלי Keley in Hebrew, though they literally signify a vessel, yet they are both used to signify any kind of instrument, or the means by which an act is done. In the Tract. Sohar Exod. fol. 87, on these words of Boaz to Ruth, Ruth 2:9, When thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink, etc., there are these remarkable words . “כלי keley, vessels; that is, the righteous, who are called the vessels or instruments of Jehovah; for it is decreed that the whole world shall bring gifts to the King Messiah; and these are the vessels of the Lord: vessels, I say, which the holy and blessed God uses, although they be brittle; but they are brittle only in this world, that they may establish the law and the worship with which the holy and blessed God is worshipped in this world; neither can this ministry be exercised but by vessels or instruments.”

This mode of speech was common also among the Greek and Roman writers. So POLYBIUS, speaking of Damocles, Excerpta, vol. iii. lib. 13, [Edit. Ernesti,] says, ην υπηρετικον σκευος, και πολλας εχων

εφορμας εις πραγματων οικονομιαν. “He was a useful instrument, and fit for the management of affairs.” We find Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 4:4, using the same word, σκευος, for the body, agreeable to the expression of Lucretius, iii. 441, Corpus, quod VAS quasi constitit ejus. “The BODY, which is the VESSEL or instrument of the soul.” See Bp. Pearce on this passage.

Chosen vessel.-σκευος εκλογης is properly a Hebraism, for an excellent or well-adapted instrument. Every reader of the Bible must have noticed how often the word chosen is used there to signify excelling or eminent: so we use the word choice, “choice men,” eminent persons; “choice things,” excellent articles. So in Jeremiah 22:7: They shall cut down the choice cedars, וְכָרְתוּ מִבְּחַר אֲרָזִים vecaretu MIBCHAR arazeyca; και εκκοψουσι τας εκλεκτατας κεδρους σου, SEPT. They shall cut the most EXCELLENT of thy cedars; or thy cedar trees, which are the most excellent of their kind, they will cut down. Whoever considers the character of St. Paul, his education, attainments in natural knowledge, the distinguished part he took-first against Christianity, and afterwards, on the fullest conviction, the part he took in its favor-will at once perceive how well he was every way qualified for the great work to which God had called him.

*To bear my name before the Gentiles*— To carry the ensign of the cross among the Greeks and Romans; and, by the demonstration of the Spirit, to confound their wisdom and learning, and prove that neither salvation nor happiness could be found in any other. Hence he was emphatically called, the apostle of the Gentiles, 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11. See also Galatians 2:7, 8, and Ephesians 3:8.

**Verse 16.** *How great things he must suffer*— Instead of proceeding as a persecutor, and inflicting sufferings on others, I will show him how many things he himself must suffer for preaching that very doctrine which he has been hitherto employed in persecuting. Strange change indeed! And with great show of reason, as with incontrovertible strength of argument, has a noble writer, Lord Lyttleton, adduced the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and his subsequent conduct, as an irrefragable proof of the truth of Christianity.



Some think that the words, I will show him, etc., refer to a visionary representation, which Christ was immediately to give Saul, of the trials and difficulties which he should have to encounter; as also of that death by which he should seal his testimony to the truth. If so, what a most thorough conviction must Saul have had of the truth of Christianity, cheerfully and deliberately to give up all worldly honors and profits, and go forward in a work which he knew a violent death was to terminate!

**Verse 17. *Brother Saul***— As he found that the Head of the Church had adopted Saul into the heavenly family, he made no scruple to give him the right hand of fellowship, and therefore said, Brother Saul.

***The Lord, even Jesus***— Of what use is this intrusive word even here? It injures the sense. St. Luke never wrote it; and our translators should not have inserted it. The Lord Jesus, the sovereign Jesus who appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Christ could have cured him so miraculously by his own power, without human means, as he had enlightened his heart without them; but he will honor man by making him his agent, even in working miracles.

***And be filled with the Holy Ghost.***— So it appears that the Holy Spirit was given to him at this time, and probably by the imposition of the hands of Ananias. To say that it would be degrading to an apostle to receive the Holy Ghost by means of one who was not an apostle is a very flimsy argument against the evidence which the text affords that Saul did receive this Spirit by the ministry of Ananias: besides, Saul was not an apostle at this time; he was not even a Christian; and the Holy Ghost, which he received now, was given more to make him a thorough Christian convert than to make him an apostle. No person will deny that he was baptized by Ananias; and certainly there was as strong an objection against an apostle receiving baptism from one who was not an apostle as there could be in receiving the Holy Spirit from such a person. It is very likely that Ananias was either one of the seventy disciples commissioned by Jesus Christ himself, or one of those who had been converted on the day of pentecost. If he were the former, any authority that man could have he had. But who was the instrument is a matter of little importance; as the apostleship, and the grace by which it was to be fulfilled, came immediately from Jesus

Christ himself. Nor has there ever been an apostle, nor a legitimate successor of an apostle, that was not made such by Christ himself. If we consider the authority as coming by man, or through any description of men, we should be arrested and confounded by the difficult question, Who baptized the apostles? Jesus Christ baptized no man, John 4:2. Who then baptized Peter! Can the Roman conclave answer this question? I trow not. It would be as difficult to answer it as to prove Peter's supremacy. We have no evidence who baptized the apostles, who themselves baptized so many others. The truth is, none but Christ ever made an apostle; and none but himself can make and qualify a Christian minister.

**Verse 18. *There fell from his eyes as it had been scales***— This was real: he had been so dazzled with the brightness of the light that we may suppose the globe of the eye, and particularly the cornea, had suffered considerable injury. The structure of the cornea was doubtless much disturbed, and the whole of that humor would be rendered opaque, and incapable of permitting the rays of light to pass through the different humours to the retina, where all the images of things transmitted through the lenses, or humours, are distinctly painted. In the miraculous cure the membrane was restored to its primitive state, and the opaque matter separated from the cornea, in the form of thin laminae or scales. This being done, the light would have as free a passage as formerly, and the result would be distinct vision.

***And arose, and was baptized.***— That he was baptized by Ananias there is every reason to believe; as he appears to have been the chief Christian at Damascus. As baptism implied, in an adult, the public profession of that faith into which he was baptized, this baptism of Saul proved, at once, his own sincerity, and the deep and thorough conviction he had of the truth of Christianity.

**Verse 19. *When he had received meat, he was strengthened***— His mind must have been greatly worn down under his three days' conviction of sin, and the awful uncertainty he was in concerning his state; but when he was baptized, and had received the Holy Ghost, his soul was Divinely invigorated; and now, by taking food, his bodily strength, greatly exhausted by three days' fasting, was renewed also. The body is not supported by the bread of life, nor the soul by the bread that perisheth:

each must have its proper aliment, that the whole man may be invigorated, and be enabled to perform all the functions of the animal and spiritual life with propriety and effect.

*Then was Saul certain days with the disciples*— Doubtless under instructions, relative to the doctrines of Christianity; which he must learn particularly, in order to preach them successfully. His miraculous conversion did not imply that he must then have a consummate knowledge of every Christian doctrine. To this day we find that even the genuine Christian convert has a thousand things to learn; and for his instruction he is placed in the Church of Christ, where he is built up on his most holy faith by the ministry and experience of the disciples. Without the communion of saints, who is likely to make a steady and consistent Christian; even though his conversion should have been the most sincere and the most remarkable?

**Verse 20. *Preached Christ in the synagogues***— Instead of *χριστον*, Christ, *ιησουν*, Jesus, is the reading of ABCE, several others of high importance, together with the Syriac, Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, and Vulgate.

The great question to be determined, for the conviction of the Jews, was that JESUS was the Son of God. That the Christ, or Messiah, was to be the Son of God, they all believed. Saul was now convinced that Jesus, whom they had crucified, and who had appeared to him on the way, was the Son of God, or Messiah; and therefore as such he proclaimed him. The word Christ should be changed for Jesus, as the latter is, without doubt, the genuine reading.

The first offers of the grace of the Gospel were uniformly made to the Jews. Saul did not at first offer Jesus to the heathens at Damascus; but to the synagogues of the Jews.

**Verse 21. *Is not this he that destroyed them***— *ὁ πορθησας*. The verb *πορθειν* has three acceptations in the Greek writers: 1. To treat one as an enemy, to spoil him of his goods. 2. To lead away captive, to imprison. 3. To slay. Paul was properly *πορθων*, a destroyer, in all these senses. 1. He acted as the most determined enemy of the Christians: Being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them to strange cities, Acts 26:11. 2. He

shut up many of the saints in prison, Acts 8:3; 9:14; 26:10. 3. He persecuted them unto death—gave his voice against them that they might be destroyed, and was a principal instrument in the martyrdom of Stephen. He breathed threatenings and slaughter. See Acts 7:58; 8:1; 9:1; 26:10, 11. Therefore these three meanings of the original word are all exemplified in the conduct of Saul.

**Verse 22. *Confounded the Jews***— *συνεχυνε*, Overwhelmed them so with his arguments that they were obliged to blush for the weakness of their own cause.

***Proving that this***— *ουτος*, This person, viz. JESUS, is very Christ; *εστιν ο χριστος*, IS THE CHRIST, or Messiah. See on Acts 9:21.

**Verse 23. *And after that many days were fulfilled***— What follows relates to transactions which took place about three years after his conversion, when he had come a second time to Damascus, after having been in Arabia. See Galatians 1:17, 18. What he did in Arabia we know not; he probably preached Christ in different Jewish synagogues; but with what fruit we are not told. St. Luke, who could not have been ignorant of this part of his history, passes it over in silence; and any assertion, at this distance of time, RELATIVE to his employment in Arabia for those three years, must be both foolish and impertinent.

**Verse 24. *They watched the gates day and night to kill him.***— At this time Damascus was under the government of Aretas, king of Arabia, who was now at war with Herod, his son-in-law, who had put away his daughter in order to marry Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. As Herod was supported by the Romans, Saul's enemies might intimate that he was in league with them or Herod; and, as the gates of the city were constantly watched and shut, that no spy might enter, and no fugitive get away, they thought it would be easy to apprehend him; and doubtless got orders for the different officers at the gates to be on the look-out that he might not be permitted to escape.

**Verse 25. *Let him down, by the wall***— Favoured, probably, by a house built against or upon the wall, through the window of which they could lower him in a basket; and by this means he made his escape. His escape was something similar to that of the spies at Jericho, Joshua 2:15.

**Verse 26. *He assayed to join himself to the disciples***— *επειρατο κολλασθαι*, He endeavored to get closely united to them, to be in religious fellowship with them.

***Believed not that he was a disciple.***— They did not suppose it possible that such a person could be converted to the faith of Christ. The full power of Divine grace, in the conversion of the soul, was not yet completely known.

**Verse 27. *Barnabas-brought him to the apostles***— That is, to Peter and James; for others of the apostles he saw none, Galatians 1:19. It appears that he went up at this time to Jerusalem merely to see Peter, with whom he abode fifteen days, Galatians 1:18. How it came that the apostles and Church at Jerusalem had not heard of Saul's conversion, which had taken place three years before, is not easy to be accounted for. The following considerations may help; 1. It is certain that intelligence did not travel speedily in those primitive times; there were few open roads, and no regular posts, except those between military stations. 2. Though there were many Jews in Damascus, and several Christians, yet the city was heathen, and under a heathen king, with whom the Jews at Jerusalem could have little commerce. 3. Though Herod had married the daughter of Aretas, yet, as he had put her away, there were great animosities between the two courts, which at last broke out into an open war; this must have prevented all social and commercial intercourse. 4. The Christians were at that time greatly persecuted by the Jews, and therefore the few that dwelt at Damascus could have little connection, if any, with their brethren at Jerusalem. 5. It might be the interest of the Jews at Jerusalem, supposing they had heard of it, to keep the fact of Saul's conversion as quiet as possible, that the Christian cause might not gain credit by it. 6. They might have heard of his conversion; but either did not fully credit what they had heard, or were not satisfied that the person who now presented himself was the man; for it is not likely that all the Christians at Jerusalem had been personally acquainted with Saul.

**Verse 28. *He was with them coming in and going out***— Freely conversing and associating with them; but this seems to have continued only fifteen days. See Galatians 1:18.

**Verse 29. *Disputed against the Grecians***— That is, the Hellenistic Jews, viz. those who lived in Grecian cities, spoke the Greek language, and used the Septuagint version for their scriptures. And thus the Syriac version has interpreted this place. See the note on Acts 6:1, where this subject is largely explained.

**Verse 30. *They brought him down to Caesarea***— Calmet contends that this was Caesarea of Palestine, and not Caesarea Philippi; it being his opinion, and indeed that of others, that where this word occurs without any addition, in the New Testament, Caesarea of Palestine is meant, and not Caesarea Philippi. See on Acts 8:40.

***Sent him forth to Tarsus.***— This was his own city; and it was right that he should proclaim to his own countrymen and relatives that Gospel through which he was become wise to salvation.

**Verse 31. *Then had the Churches rest***— Instead of *ια εκκλησιαι*, the Churches, ABC, several others, the Syriac, Coptic, AETHiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate, have *ηεκκλησια*, the Church. Every assembly of God's people was a Church; the aggregate of these assemblies was THE CHURCH. The word *ειρηνην*, which we translate rest, and which literally signifies peace, evidently means, in this place, prosperity; and in this sense both it and the Hebrew *שָׁלוֹם* shalom are repeatedly used. But what was the cause of this rest or success? Some say, the conversion of Saul, who before made havoc of the Church; but this is not likely, as he could not be a universal cause of persecution and distress, however active and virulent he might have been during the time of his enmity to the Christian Church. Besides his own persecution, related above, shows that the opposition to the Gospel continued with considerable virulence three years after his conversion; therefore it was not Saul's ceasing to be a persecutor that gave this rest to the Churches. Dr. Lardner, with a greater show of probability, maintains that this rest was owing to the following circumstance: Soon after Caligula's accession to the imperial dignity, the Jews at Alexandria suffered very much from the Egyptians in that city; and at length their oratories were all destroyed. In the third year of Caligula, A.D. 39, Petronius, who was made president of Syria in the place of Vitellius, was sent by the emperor to set up his statue in the temple at Jerusalem. This was a thunder-stroke to the Jews, and so occupied them that they had no

time to think of any thing else; apprehending that their temple must be defiled, and the national religion destroyed, or themselves run the risk of being exterminated if they rebelled against the imperial decree.

The account given by Josephus will set this in a clear point of view. “Caligula sent Petronius to go with an army to Jerusalem, to set up his statues in the temple, enjoining him if the Jews opposed it, to put to death all that made resistance, and to make all the rest of the nation slaves. Petronius therefore marched from Antioch into Judea, with three legions, and a large body of auxiliaries raised in Syria. All were hereupon filled with consternation, the army being come as far as Ptolemais. The Jews, then, gathering together, went to the plain near Ptolemais, and entreated Petronius in the first place for their laws, in the next place for themselves. Petronius was moved with their solicitations, and, leaving his army and the statues, went into Galilee, and called an assembly of the heads of the Jews at Tiberias; and, having exhorted them without effect to submit to the emperor’s orders, said, ‘Will ye then fight against Caesar?’ They answered that they offered up sacrifices twice every day for the emperor and the Roman people; but that if he would set up the images, he ought first of all to sacrifice the whole Jewish nation; and that they were ready to submit themselves, their wives and children, to the slaughter.” Philo gives a similar account of this transaction. See Lardner’s *Credibility*, Works, vol. i. p. 97, etc.

It appears, therefore, that, as these transactions took place about the time mentioned in the text, their persecution from the Romans diverted them from persecuting the Christians; and THEN had the Churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria; the terror occasioned by the imperial decree having spread itself through all those places.

**Were edified**— *οικοδομουμεναι*, A metaphor taken from a building. The ground is marked out; 2. the ichnograph, or dimensions of the building, ascertained; 3. the foundation is digged; 4. the foundation stone laid; 5. the walls builded up with course upon course; 6. the top-stone brought on; 7. the roof raised, and the whole covered in; and, 8. the interior part fitted up and adorned, and rendered convenient for the intended inhabitant. This figure frequently occurs in the sacred writings, especially in the New Testament. It has its reason in the original creation of man: God made the

first human being as a shrine or temple, in which himself might dwell. Sin entered, and the heavenly building was destroyed. The materials, however, though all dislocated, and covered with rubbish and every way defiled, yet exist; no essential power or faculty of the soul having been lost. The work of redemption consists in building up this house as it was in the beginning, and rendering it a proper habitation for God. The various powers, faculties, and passions, are all to be purified and refined by the power of the Holy Spirit, and order and harmony restored to the whole soul. All this is beautifully pointed out by St. Peter, 1 Peter 2:4, 5: To whom (Jesus Christ) coming as unto a LIVING STONE, chosen of God and precious, ye also, as LIVING STONES, are BUILT UP a spiritual HOUSE, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ. And St. Paul, who, from his own profession as a tent-maker, could best seize on the metaphor, and press it into this spiritual service, goes through the whole figure at large, in the following inimitable words: Ye are the HOUSEHOLD of God, and are BUILT upon the FOUNDATION of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief CORNERSTONE, in whom all the BUILDING, FITLY FRAMED together, groweth unto a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord: in whom ye also are BUILDED together for a HABITATION of God, through the Spirit, Ephesians 2:19-22. Edification signifies, therefore, an increase in the light, life, and power of God; being founded on the doctrine of Christ crucified; having the soul purified from all unrighteousness, and fitted, by increasing holiness, to be a permanent residence for the ever-blessed God.

***Walking in the fear of the Lord***— Keeping a continually tender conscience; abhorring all sin; having respect to every Divine precept; dreading to offend him from whom the soul has derived its being and its blessings. Without this salutary fear of God there never can be any circumspect walking.

***In the comfort of the Holy Ghost***— In a consciousness of their acceptance and union with God, through his Spirit, by which solid peace and happiness are brought into the soul; the truly religious man knowing and feeling that he is of God, by the Spirit which is given him: nothing less can be implied in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.



***Were multiplied.***— No wonder that the Church of God increased, when such lights as these shone among men. This is a short, but full and forcible description of the righteousness, purity, and happiness of the primitive Church.

**Verse 32. *As Peter passed throughout all quarters***— *δια παντων*, Bp. Pearce thinks, should be translated, not through all quarters, but through all the saints. The Churches having rest, the apostles made use of this interval of quiet to visit the different congregations, in order to build them up on their most holy faith. Of Saul we hear no more till Acts 11:30, which is supposed to be about five years after this time; eight in all from his conversion. Peter, it seems, had continued in Jerusalem all the time that the Churches were in a state of persecution throughout the whole land. Great as he was, he never evidenced that steady determinate courage by which St. Paul was so eminently distinguished; nor did he ever suffer half so much for God and his truth.

***To the saints***— The Jews, who had been converted to Christianity.

***Which dwelt at Lydda.***— A town in the tribe of Ephraim, almost on the border of Judea, and nigh unto Joppa: it was about ten leagues from Jerusalem, and was afterwards known by the name of Diospolis, or the city of Jupiter.

**Verse 33. *A certain man named Eneas***— This name has been celebrated in the annals of heathen poetry, in that beautiful work of the poet Virgil, called the *Aeneid*; which gives an account of the misfortunes, travels, wars, etc., of a Trojan prince of this name, after the destruction of his native city, Troy. On the difference of names which so frequently occurs in some parts of the Scriptures, Calmet makes the following judicious remarks: As both Greek and Hebrew, or Syriac, were commonly spoken in Palestine, most persons had two names, one Greek and the other Hebrew. Thus Peter was called Cephias in Hebrew, and Petros in Greek. Paul was called Saul in Hebrew, and Paulos in Greek. The person in Acts 9:36, Tabitha in Hebrew, and Dorcas in Greek. And the paralytic person cured by Peter, Hananiah in Hebrew, and Aineas in Greek. So Thomas was the Hebrew name of the apostle who in Greek was called Didymus.

***Had kept his bed eight years***— This was occasioned by a palsy; and now inveterate and hopeless, through its long standing.

**Verse 34. *Jesus Christ maketh thee whole***— Not Peter, for he had no power but what was given him from above. And, as an instrument, any man could heal with this power as well as Peter; but God chose to put honor upon those primitive preachers of his word, that men might see that they were commissioned from heaven.

***Arise, and make thy bed.***— Give now full proof that Jesus Christ HAS made thee whole, by arising, and by making thy bed. He was at home, and therefore was not commanded, as the paralytic person, to take up his bed; but he was ordered to make it-strew it afresh, that all might see that the cure was perfect.

**Verse 35. *All that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him***— Saron was that champaign country that lay between Joppa and Lydda. The long affliction of this man had been well known; and his cure, consequently, became a subject of general examination: it was found to be real. It was known to have been performed by the grace and mercy of Christ; and the consequence of all this conviction was that all these people became Christians.

**Verse 36. *Now there was at Joppa***— This was a sea-port town on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about a day's journey from Jerusalem. It is supposed to be the same which is called in the Old Testament Japho, which belonged to the tribe of Dan, Joshua 19:46. It is at present called Jaffa, and is still a place of considerable note.

***A certain disciple named Tabitha***— This word is more properly Syriac than Hebrew. (Syriac) tebitio is the word in the Syriac version, and is their manner of writing the Hebrew צְבִי tsebi, the ט teth being changed for the צ tsaddi. The word (Syriac) tabio, and the feminine (Syriac) tabitho, have the same meaning as the Hebrew צְבִי tsebi and the Greek δορκας, Dorcas, and signify the gazel or antelope; and it is still customary in the east to give the names of beautiful animals to young women. The comparison of fine eyes to those of the antelope is continually occurring in the writings of the Arabic and Persian poets. The person in the tern

probably had her name in the same way. She was very beautiful, and was therefore called Tabitha and Dorcas.

***This woman was full of good works***— She spent her life in acts of kindness and charity. Her soul was full of love to God and man; and her whole time was filled up with works of piety and mercy.

**Verse 37. *She was sick, and died***— Even her holiness and usefulness could not prevent her from sickness and death. Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return, is a decree that must be fulfilled, even on the saints; for the body is dead, sentenced to death, because of sin, though the spirit be life because of righteousness.

***Whom when they had washed***— Having the fullest proof that she was dead, they prepared for her interment. In most nations of the world it was customary to wash their dead before they buried them, and before they laid them out to lie in state, as Homer tells us was the case with the body of Patroclus: —

ως ειπων, εταροισις εκεκλετο διος ακιλλευς,  
αμοι πυρι στησαι τριποδα μεγαν, οφρα ταχιστα  
πατροκλον λουσειαν —  
και τοτε δη λουσαν τε, και ηλειψαν λιπ' ελαιω —

Iliad xviii. 343.

*“So saying, he bade his train surround with fire  
A tripod huge, that they might quickly cleanse  
Patroclus from all stains of clotted gore.  
They on the blazing hearth a tripod placed,  
Infused the water, thrust dry wood beneath,  
And soon the flames, encompassing around  
Its ample belly, warm'd the flood within.  
Soon as the water in the singing brass  
Simmer'd, they bathed him, and with limpid oil  
Anointed.*

*They stretch'd him on his bed, then cover'd him  
From head to feet with linen texture light,  
And with a wide unsullied mantle last.”*

COWPER.

The waking or watching of the dead was also practised among the ancient Greeks, as we learn from a preceding paragraph, where Achilles, addressing his dead friend Patroclus, tells him: —

τοφρα δε παρα νηυσι κορωνισι κεισεαι αυτως·  
αμοι δε σε τρααι και δαρδανιδες βαθυκολποι  
κλαουσονται, νυκτας τε και ηματα δακρυχεουσαι

Il. xviii. 338.

— *“Mean time, among  
My lofty galleys thou shalt lie, with tears  
Mourn’d day and night, by Trojan captives fair  
And Dardan, compassing thy bier around.”*

COWPER.

A similar description is given by Virgil of the funeral obsequies of Misenus, *AEneid* vi. ver. 212.

*Nec minus interea Misenum in littore Teuciri  
Flebant, et cineri ingrato suprema ferebant.*

*Pars calidos latices et aena undantia flammis  
Expediunt, corpusque lavant frigentis et unguent  
Fit gemitus: tum membra toro defleta reponunt,  
Purpureasque super vestes, velamina nota,  
Conjiciunt, etc.*

*“Meanwhile, the Trojan troops, with weeping eyes,  
To dead Misenus pay his obsequies.  
First from the ground a lofty pile they rear  
Of pitch-trees, oaks, and pines, and unctuous fir:  
The fabric’s front with cypress twigs they strew;  
And stick the sides with boughs of baleful yew;  
The topmost part his glitt’ring arms adorn:  
Warm waters then, in brazen cauldrons borne,  
Are pour’d to wash his body, joint by joint;  
And fragrant oils the stiffen’d limbs anoint.  
With groans and cries Misenus they deplore.  
Then on a bier with purple cover’d o’er  
The breathless body, thus bewail’d, they lay.”*

DRYDEN.

These rites, in many respects, resemble those still used among the native Irish. See the account of the funeral ceremonies of the

Egyptians, in the notes on Genesis 50:2. The primitive Christians washed the bodies of their dead not only out of decency and affectionate respect to them, but as a token of their firm belief in the resurrection of the dead.

**Verse 38. *Sent unto him—desiring—that he would not delay to come***— Tabitha died at Joppa, and Peter was at Lydda, about four leagues distant. But why did they send for Peter? We cannot tell. It is not likely that they had any expectation that he should raise her from the dead; for none of the apostles had as yet raised any; and if God did not choose to restore Stephen to life, this favor could not be reasonably expected in behalf of inferior persons. However, they might hope that he who cured Eneas at Lydda might cure Dorcas; for it is probable that they had sent for Peter before she died; and in this sense we might understand the *απεστειλαν* of the text.

**Verse 39. *Showing the coats and garments***— *χιτωνας και ιματια*, the outer and inner garments. These, it appears, she had made for the poor, and more particularly for poor widows, in whose behalf she had incessantly labored.

**Verse 40. *Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed***— It was not even known to Peter that God would work this miracle: therefore he put all the people out, that he might seek the will of God by fervent prayer, and during his supplications be liable neither to distraction nor interruption, which he must have experienced had he permitted this company of weeping widows to remain in the chamber.

***And turning-to the body***— *σωμα*, The lifeless body, for the spirit had already departed.

***Said, Tabitha, arose.***— During his wrestling with God, he had, undoubtedly, received confidence that she would be raised at his word.

***And when she saw Peter, she sat up.***— As Dorcas was a woman so eminently holy, her happy soul had doubtless gone to the paradise of God. Must she not therefore be filled with regret to find herself thus called back to earth again? And must not the remembrance of the glories she had now lost fill her with dislike to all the goods of earth? No: for, 1. As a saint of God, her Maker's will must be hers; because she knew that this will must

be ever best. 2. It is very likely that, in the case of the revivescence of saint or sinner, God mercifully draws a veil over all they have seen or known, so that they have no recollection of what they have either seen or heard. Even St. Paul found it impossible to tell what he had heard in the third heaven, though he was probably not in the state of the dead. Of the economy of the invisible world God will reveal nothing. We walk here by faith, and not by sight.

**Verse 41. *Saints and widows***— In primitive times the widows formed a distinct part of the Christian Church.

**Verse 42. *Many believed in the Lord***.— That is, in Christ Jesus, in whose name and through whose power they understood this miracle to be wrought. This miracle, as well as that at Lydda, was not only the means of strengthening the faith of the disciples, and gaining credit to the cause of Christianity, but also of bringing many sincere converts to the Lord, so that the Church was thereby both builded up and multiplied.

**Verse 43. *He tarried many days in Joppa***— Taking advantage of the good impression made on the people's minds by the miracle, he preached to them the great truths of Christianity, and thus established them in the faith.

***Simon a tanner***.— Whether the original word *βυρσευς* signifies a tanner or a currier, is of little consequence. The person who dealt in the hides, whether of clean or unclean animals, could not be in high repute among the Jews. Even in Joppa, the trade appears to have been reputed unclean; and therefore this Simon had his house by the sea side. See Acts 10:6. Of the trade itself the Talmudists speak with great contempt; they reckon it among blemishes. See proofs in Schoettgen.

1. THUS terminates what has not been improperly called the first period of the Christian Church, which began at the day of pentecost, Acts 2:1, and continued to the resurrection of Dorcas; a period of about eight years. During the whole of this time the Gospel was preached to the Jews only, no Gentile being called before Cornelius, the account of whose conversion, and the Divine vision that led to it, are detailed in the following chapter. Salvation was of the Jews: theirs were the fathers, the covenants, and the promises, and from them came Christ Jesus; and it was right that they

should have the first offer of a salvation which, while it was a light to lighten the Gentiles, was to be the glory of the Israelitish people. When they utterly rejected it, then the apostles turned unto the Gentiles. Among them the Christian Church was founded, and thus the reprobates became the elect, and the elect became reprobates. Reader! behold the goodness and severity of God! Towards them that fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off, Romans 11:22. Thou canst only stand by faith; and be not high-minded, but fear. Nothing less than Christ dwelling in thy heart by faith can save thy soul unto eternal life.

2. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is one of the most remarkable facts recorded in the history of the Christian Church. When we consider the man; the manner in which he was brought to the knowledge of the truth; the impression made on his own mind and heart by the vision he had on his way to Damascus, and the effect produced in all his subsequent life, we have a series of the most convincing evidences of the truth of the Christian religion. In this light he ever viewed the subject himself; the manner of his conversion he ever appealed to, as the most proper apology for his conduct; and, on several most important occasions, he not only refers to it, but enters into a detail of its circumstances, that his hearers might see that the excellency of the power was of GOD and not of man.

Saul of Tarsus was not a man of a light, fickle, and uncultivated mind. His natural powers were vast, his character the most decided, and his education, as we learn from his historian, and from his writings, was at once both liberal and profound. He was born and brought up in a city which enjoyed every privilege of which Rome itself could boast, and was a successful rival both of Rome and Athens in arts and science. Though a Jew, it is evident that his education was not confined to matters that concerned his own people and country alone. He had read the best Greek writers, as his style, allusions, and quotations sufficiently prove; and, on matters which concern his own religion, he was instructed by Gamaliel, one of the most celebrated doctors the synagogue had ever produced. He was evidently master of the three great languages which were spoken among the only people who deserved the name of nations—the Hebrew, and its prevailing dialect, the Chaldio-Syriac; the Greek, and the Latin; languages which, notwithstanding all the cultivation through which the

earth has passed, maintain their rank, which is a most decisive superiority over all the languages of the universe. Was it likely that such a man, possessing such a mind, cultivated to such an extent, could have been imposed on or deceived? The circumstances of his conversion forbid the supposition: they do more; they render it impossible. One consideration on this subject will prove that imposture in this case was impossible: he had no communication with Christians; the then that accompanied him to Damascus were of his own mind-virulent, determined enemies to the very name of Christ; and his conversion took place in the open day, on the open road, in company only with such men as the persecuting high priest and Sanhedrin thought proper to be employed in the extermination of Christianity. In such circumstances, and in such company, no cheat could be practised. But was not he the deceiver? The supposition is absurd and monstrous, for this simple reason, that there was no motive that could prompt him to feign what he was not; and no end that could be answered by assuming the profession of Christianity. Christianity had in it such principles as must expose it to the hatred of Greece, Rome, and Judea. It exposed the absurdity and folly of Grecian and Roman superstition and idolatry, and asserted itself to be the completion, end, and perfection of the whole Mosaic economy. It was therefore hated by all those nations, and its followers despised, detested, and persecuted. From the profession of such a religion, so circumstanced, could any man, who possessed even the most moderate share of common sense, expect secular emolument or advantage? No! Had not this apostle of the Gentiles the fullest conviction of the truth of Christianity, the fullest proof of its heavenly influence on his own soul, the brightest prospect of the reality and blessedness of the spiritual world, he could not have taken one step in the path which the doctrine of Christ pointed out. Add to this, that he lived long after his conversion, saw Christianity and its influence in every point of view, and tried it in all circumstances. What was the result? The deepest conviction of its truth; so that he counted all things dross and dung in comparison of the excellency of its knowledge. Had he continued a Jew he would have infallibly risen to the first dignities and honors of his nation; but he willingly forfeited all his secular privileges and well grounded expectations of secular honor and emolument, and espoused a cause from which he could not only have no expectation of worldly advantage, but which, most evidently and necessarily, exposed him to all sorts of privations,



sufferings, hardships, dangers, and death itself! These were not only the unavoidable consequences of the cause he espoused; but he had them fully in his apprehension and constantly in his eye. He predicted them, and knew that every step he took was a progressive advance in additional sufferings, and the issue of his journey must be a violent death!

The whole history of St. Paul proves him to be one of the greatest of men; and his conduct after he became a Christian, had it not sprung from a Divine motive, of the truth of which he had the fullest conviction, would have shown him to be one of the weakest of men. The conclusion therefore is self-evident, that in St. Paul's call there could be no imposture, that in his own mind there could be no deception, that his conversion was from heaven, and the religion he professed and taught, the infallible and eternal truth of Jehovah. In this full conviction he counted not his life dear unto him, but finished his rugged race with joy, cheerfully giving up his life for the testimony of Jesus; and thus his luminous sun set in blood, to rise again in glory. The conversion of St. Paul is the triumph of Christianity; his writings, the fullest exhibition and defense of its doctrines; and his life and death, a glorious illustration of its principles. Armed with this history of Paul's conversion and life, the feeblest believer needs not fear the most powerful infidel. The ninth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles will ever remain an inexpugnable fortress to defend Christianity and defeat its enemies. Reader, hath not God so done his marvellous works that they may be had in everlasting remembrance?

## CHAPTER 10.

*An angel appears to Cornelius, a centurion, and directs him to send to Joppa, for Peter, to instruct him in the way of salvation, 1-6. He sends accordingly, 7, 8. While the messengers are on their way to Joppa, Peter has a remarkable vision, by which he is taught how he should treat the Gentiles, 9-16. The messengers arrive at the house of Simon the tanner, and deliver their message, 17-22. They lodge there that night, and on the morrow Peter accompanies them to Caesarea, where they find Cornelius and his friends assembled, waiting the coming of Peter, 23, 24. Peter makes an apology for his coming, and inquires for what purpose Cornelius had sent for him, 25-29. Cornelius answers, 30-33. And Peter preaches unto him Jesus, as the Savior of the world, and the Judge of quick and dead, 34-43. While he speaks the Holy Ghost descends on Cornelius and his company; and they speak with new tongues, and magnify God, 44-46. Peter commands them to be baptized in the name of the Lord, 47, 48.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10.

I have already observed (see the conclusion of the preceding chapter) that hitherto the apostles confined their labors among the Jews and circumcised proselytes, not making any offer of salvation to the Gentiles; for they had fully imbibed the opinion that none could enter into the kingdom of God, and be finally saved, unless they were circumcised, and became obedient to the law of Moses. This prejudice would have operated so as finally to prevent them from preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, had not God, by a particular interposition of his mercy and goodness, convinced Peter, and through him all the other apostles, that he had accepted the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and would put no difference between the one and the other, purifying their hearts by faith, and giving the Gentiles the Holy Ghost, as he had before given it to the Jews. The means which he used to produce this conviction in the minds of the apostles are detailed at length in the following chapter.

**Verse 1.** *There was a certain man in Caesarea*— This was Caesarea of Palestine, called also Strato's Tower, as has been already noted, and the residence of the Roman procurator.

**A centurion**— ἑκατονταρχῆς, The chief or captain of 100 men, as both the Greek and Latin words imply. How the Roman armies were formed, divided, and marshalled, see in the notes on Matthew 20:16. A centurion among the Romans was about the same rank as a captain among us.

**The band called the Italian band**— The word σπειρα, which we translate band, signifies the same as cohort or regiment, which sometimes consisted of 555 infantry, and 66 cavalry; but the cohors prima, or first cohort, consisted of 1105 infantry, and 132 cavalry, in the time of Vegetius. But the cavalry are not to be considered as part of the cohort, but rather a company joined to it. A Roman legion consisted of ten cohorts; the first of which surpassed all the others, both in numbers and in dignity. When in former times the Roman legion contained 6000, each cohort consisted of 600, and was divided into three manipuli; but both the legions and cohorts were afterwards various in the numbers they contained. As there were doubtless many Syrian auxiliaries, the regiment in question was distinguished from them as consisting of Italian, i.e. Roman, soldiers. The Italian cohort is not unknown among the Roman writers: Gruter gives an inscription, which was found in the Forum Sempronii, on a fine table of marble, nine feet long, four feet broad, and four inches thick; on which are the following words: —

L. MAESIO. L. F. POL.  
RVFO. PROC. AVG.  
TRIB. MIL. LEG. X.  
APPOLLINARIS. TRIB.  
COH. MIL. ITALIC. VOLUNT.  
QVAE. EST. IN. SYRIA. PRAEF.  
FABRVM. BIS.

See Gruter's Inscriptions, p. cccxxxiii-iv.

This was probably the same cohort as that mentioned here by St. Luke; for the tenth legion mentioned in the above inscription was certainly in Judea, A.D. 69. Tacitus also mentions the Italica legio, the Italic legion, lib. i. c. 59, which Junius Blaesus had under his command in the province of Lyons. We learn, from the Roman historians, that the fifth, tenth, and

fifteenth legions were stationed in Judea; and the third, fourth, sixth, and twelfth in Syria. The Italic legion was in the battle of Bedriacum, fought, A.D. 69, between the troops of Vitellius and Otho; and performed essential services to the Vitellian army. See Tacitus, Hist. lib. ii. cap. 41. The issue of this battle was the defeat of the Othonians, on which Otho slew himself, and the empire was confirmed to Vitellius.

Wherever he sees it necessary, St. Luke carefully gives dates and facts, to which any might have recourse who might be disposed to doubt his statements: we have had several proofs of this in his Gospel. See especially Luke 1:1, etc., and Luke 3:1, etc., and the notes there.

**Verse 2. *A devout man***— ευσεβης, from ευ, well, and σεβομαι, I worship. A person who worships the true God, and is no idolater.

***One that feared God***— φοβουμενος τον θεον, One who was acquainted with the true God, by means of his word and laws; who respected these laws, and would not dare to offend his Maker and his Judge. This is necessarily implied in the fear of God.

***With all his house***— He took care to instruct his family in the knowledge which he himself had received; and to establish the worship of God in his house.

***Gave much alms***— His love to God led him to love men; and this love proved its sincerity by acts of beneficence and charity.

***Prayed to God alway***.— Felt himself a dependent creature; knew he had no good but what he had received; and considered God to be the fountain whence he was to derive all his blessings. He prayed to God alway; was ever in the spirit of prayer, and frequently in the act. What an excellent character is this! And yet the man was a Gentile! He was what a Jew would repute common and unclean: see Acts 10:28. He was, therefore, not circumcised; but, as he worshipped the true God, without any idolatrous mixtures, and was in good report among all the nation of the Jews, he was undoubtedly what was called a proselyte of the gate, though not a proselyte of justice, because he had not entered into the bond of the covenant by circumcision. This was a proper person, being so much of a Jew and so much of a Gentile, to form the connecting link between both

people; and God chose him that the salvation of the Jews might with as little observation as possible be transmitted to the Gentiles. The choice of such a person, through whom the door of faith was opened to the heathen world, was a proof of the wisdom and goodness of God. The man who was chosen to this honor was not a profligate Gentile; nor yet a circumcised proselyte. He was a Gentile, amiable and pure in his manners; and, for his piety and charitableness, held in high estimation among all the nation of the Jews. Against such a person they could not, with any grace, be envious, though God should pour out upon him the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 3. *He saw in a vision evidently***— The text is as plain as it can be, that an angel of God did appear to Cornelius. This was in a vision, i.e. a supernatural representation; and it was **φανερώς**, manifestly, evidently made; and at such a time too as precluded the possibility of his being asleep; for it was about the ninth hour of the day, answering to our three o'clock in the afternoon, (see note on Acts 3:1,) the time of public prayer, according to the custom of the Jews, and while Peter was engaged in that sacred duty. The angelic appearance to Cornelius was something similar to that made to Daniel, Daniel 9:20-23, and that especially to Zachariah, the father of John Baptist, Luke 1:11, etc.

**Verse 4. *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial***— Being all performed in simplicity and godly sincerity, they were acceptable to the Most High.

Come up for a memorial: This form of speech is evidently borrowed from the sacrificial system of the Jews. Pious and sincere prayers are high in God's estimation; and therefore are said to ascend to him, as the smoke and flame of the burnt-offering appeared to ascend to heaven.

These prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God: this is a manifest allusion to the meat-offering, which, in Leviticus 2:16, is said to be **זְכוּרָה** *azkerah*, a memorial, (speaking after the manner of men,) to put God in remembrance that such a person was his worshipper, and needed his protection and help. So the prayers and alms of Cornelius ascended before God as an acceptable sacrifice, and were recorded in the kingdom of heaven, that the answers might be given in their due season.

**Verse 6. *Simon a tanner***— See the note on Acts 9:43.

***What thou oughtest to do.***— From this it appears that matters of great moment had occupied the mind of Cornelius. He was not satisfied with the state of his own soul, nor with the degree he possessed of religious knowledge; and he set apart a particular time for extraordinary fasting and prayer, that God might farther reveal to him the knowledge of his will. Perhaps he had heard of Jesus, and had been perplexed with the different opinions that prevailed concerning him, and now prayed to God that he might know what part he should take; and the answer to this prayer is, “Send to Joppa for Simon Peter, he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” This clause, so explanatory, is wanting in almost every MS. and version of note. Griesbach and some others have left it out of the text. But see Acts 11:14, where it stands in substance.

**Verse 7. *And a devout soldier***— It has already been remarked that Cornelius had taken care to instruct his family in Divine things; and it appears also that he had been attentive to the spiritual interests of his regiment. We do not find that it was then, even among the Romans, considered a disgrace for a military officer to teach his men lessons of morality, and piety towards God, whatever it may be in some Christian countries in the present time.

**Verse 8. *He sent them to Joppa.***— It has been properly remarked, that from Joppa, Jonah was sent to preach to the Gentiles of Nineveh; and from the same place Peter was sent to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles at Caesarea.

**Verse 9. *On the morrow, as they went on their journey***— From Joppa to Caesarea was about twelve or fifteen leagues; the messengers could not have left the house of Cornelius till about two hours before sunset; therefore, they must have traveled a part of the night, in order to arrive at Joppa the next day, towards noon.—Calmet. Cornelius sent two of his household servants, by way of respect to Peter; probably the soldier was intended for their defense, as the roads in Judea were by no means safe.

***Peter went up upon the house-top to pray***— It has often been remarked that the houses in Judea were builded with flat roofs, on which people walked, conversed, meditated, prayed, etc. The house-top was the place of

retirement; and thither Peter went for the purpose of praying to God. In Bengal, some of the rich Hindoos have a room on the top of the house, in which they perform worship daily.

**Verse 10. *He became very hungry***— It seems that this happened about dinner-time; for it appears that they were making ready, *παρασκευαζοντων*, dressing the victuals for the family. The dinner among the ancients was a very slight meal; and they had no breakfast: their supper was their principal meal. And, in very ancient times, they ate only once in the day. Supper was the meal at which they saw their friends, the business of the day being then finished.

***He fell into a trance***— *επεπεσεν επ' αυτον εκστασις*, An ecstasy fell upon him. A person may be said to be in an ecstasy when transported with joy or admiration, so that he is insensible to every object but that on which he is engaged. Peter's ecstasy is easily accounted for: he went up to the house-top to pray: at first he felt keen hunger; but, being earnestly engaged with God, all natural appetites became absorbed in the intense application of his soul to his Maker. While every passion and appetite was under this Divine influence, and the soul, without let or hinderance, freely conversing with God, then the visionary and symbolical representation mentioned here took place.

**Verse 11. *And saw heaven opened***— His mind now entirely spiritualized, and absorbed in heavenly contemplation, was capable of discoveries of the spiritual world; a world which, with its *πληρωμα*, or plenitude of inhabitants, surrounds us at all times; but which we are incapable of seeing through the dense medium of flesh and blood, and their necessarily concomitant earthly passions. Much, however, of such a world and its economy may be apprehended by him who is purified from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and who has perfected holiness in the fear of God. But this is a subject to which the enthusiast in vain attempts to ascend. The turbulent working of his imagination, and the gross earthly crudities which he wishes to obtrude on the world as revelations from God, afford a sufficient refutation of their own blasphemous pretensions.

***A great sheet, knit at the four corners***— Perhaps intended to be an emblem of the universe, and its various nations, to the four corners of which the

Gospel was to extend, and to offer its blessings to all the inhabitants, without distinction of nation, etc.

**Verse 12. *All manner of four-footed beasts***, etc.— Every species of quadrupeds, whether wild or domestic; all reptiles, and all fowls. Consequently, both the clean and unclean were present in this visionary representation: those that the Jewish law allowed to be sacrificed to God, or proper for food; as well as those which that law had prohibited in both cases: such as the beasts that do not chew the cud; fish which have no scales; fowls of prey and such others as are specified in Leviticus 11:1, etc., where see the notes.

**Verse 13. *Rise, Peter, kill and eat***.— **θυσσον και φαγε**, Sacrifice and eat. Though this verb is sometimes used to signify the slaying of animals for food, yet, as the proper notion is to slay for the purpose of sacrifice, it appears to me to be better to preserve that meaning here. Animals that were offered in sacrifice were considered as given to God; and, when he received the life, the flesh was given to those who offered the sacrifice, that they might feed upon it; and every sacrifice had in it the nature of a covenant; and covenants were usually made by eating together on the flesh of the sacrifice offered on the occasion, God being supposed to be invisibly present with them, and partaking of the feast. The Jews and Gentiles are certainly represented by the clean and unclean animals in this large vessel: these, by the ministry of the Gospel, were to be offered up a spiritual sacrifice to God. Peter was to be a prime instrument in this work; he was to offer them to God, and rejoice in the work of his hands. The spirit of the heavenly direction seems to be this: “The middle wall of partition is now to be pulled down; the Jews and Gentiles are called to become one flock, under one shepherd and bishop of souls. Thou, Peter, shalt open the door of faith to the Gentiles, and be also the minister of the circumcision. Rise up; already a blessed sacrifice is prepared: go and offer it to God; and let thy soul feed on the fruits of his mercy and goodness, in thus showing his gracious design of saving both Jews and Gentiles by Christ crucified.”

**Verse 14. *Common or unclean***.— By common, **κοινων**, whatever was in general use among the Gentiles is to be understood; by **ακαθαρτον**, unclean, every thing that was forbidden by the Mosaic law. However, the



one word may be considered as explanatory of the other. The rabbins themselves, and many of the primitive fathers, believed that by the unclean animals forbidden by the law the Gentiles were meant.

**Verse 15. *What God hath cleansed***— God, who made at first the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, has a right to remove it, whenever and by whatever means he pleases: he, therefore, who made the distinction, for wise purposes, between the clean and the unclean, now pronounces all to be clean. He had authority to do the first; he has authority to do the last. God has purposed that the Gentiles shall have the Gospel preached to them: what he therefore has cleansed, “that call not thou common.”

**Verse 16. *This was done thrice***— For the greater certainty, and to make the deeper impression on the apostle’s mind.

***And the vessel was received up again into heaven.***— Both Jews and Gentiles came equally from God; and to him, both, by the preaching of the Gospel, shall again return.

**Verse 17. *While Peter doubted-the men stood before the gate***— In all this we find an admirable display of the economy of Providence. Cornelius prays, and has a vision which prepares him to receive instruction from Peter: Peter prays, and has a vision which prepares and disposes him to give instruction to Cornelius. While he is in doubts and perplexity what the full meaning of the vision might be, the messengers, who had been despatched under the guidance of an especial Providence, came to the door; and the Holy Spirit gives him information that his doubts should be all cleared up by accompanying the men who were now inquiring for him. How exactly does every thing in the conduct of Providence occur; and how completely is every thing adapted to time, place, and occasion! All is in weight, measure, and number. Those simple occurrences which men snatch at, and press into the service of their own wishes, and call them providential openings may, indeed, be links of a providential chain, in reference to some other matter; but unless they be found to speak the same language in all their parts, occurrence corresponding with occurrence, they are not to be construed as indications of the Divine will in reference to the claimants. Many persons, through these misapprehensions, miscarrying, have been led to charge God foolishly for the unsuccessful issue of some

business in which their passions, not his providence, prompted them to engage.

**Verse 21.** *Which were sent unto him from Cornelius*— This clause is wanting in almost every MS. of worth, and in almost all the versions.

*Behold, I am he whom ye seek*— A sudden, unexpected speech, like the address of Aeneas to Dido; when the cloud in which he was involved suddenly dissipated, and he appeared with the exclamation,

— *coram, quem quaeritis, adsum!*  
*AEn. lib. i. 595.*

*What is the cause therefore ye are come?*— He still did not know the full import of the vision; but being informed by the Holy Spirit that three men were seeking him, and that he should go with them, without scruple, he instantly obeyed; and finding them at the door, desired to know why they sought him.

**Verse 22.** *Cornelius the centurion*, etc.— They gave him the simple relation which they had received from their master. For the character of Cornelius, see the comment on Acts 10:2.

*To hear words of thee.*— But of what kind they could not as yet tell.

**Verse 23.** *Then called he them in*, etc.— They had already walked a long journey in a short time, and needed refreshment; and it was thought expedient they should rest that night with Simon the tanner.

*Certain brethren from Joppa*— They were six in number, as we learn from Acts 11:12. It was necessary that there should be several witnesses of the important transactions which were about to take place; as on no slight evidence would even the converted Jews believe that repentance unto life, and the Holy Spirit, should be granted to the Gentiles.

**Verse 24.** *His kinsmen and near friends.*— *συγγενεις*, His, relatives, and *αναγκαιους φιλους*, his necessary friends; but the Syriac makes *αναγκαιους* an epithet as well as *συγγενεις*, and thus the passage may be read, his kinsmen, his domestics, and his friends. It appears that he had collected the whole circle of his intimate acquaintance, that they also might

profit by a revelation which he expected to come immediately from heaven; and these amounted to many persons; see Acts 10:27.

**Verse 25. *Fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.***— As Peter's coming was announced by an angel, Cornelius might have supposed that Peter himself was an angel, and of a superior order; seeing he came to announce what the first angel was not employed to declare: it was, probably, in consequence of this thought that he prostrated himself before Peter, offering him the highest act of civil respect; for there was nothing in the act, as performed by Cornelius, which belonged to the worship of the true God. Prostrations to superiors were common in all Asiatic countries. The Codex Bezae, and the later Syriac in the margin reads this verse differently from all other MSS. and versions; thus, But as Peter drew nigh to Caesarea, one of the servants ran before, and told that he was come: then Cornelius leaped up, and met him, and, falling at his feet, he worshipped him. This is a very remarkable addition, and relates circumstances that we may naturally suppose did actually take place.

**Verse 26. *I myself also am a man.***— “I am not an angel; I am come to you simply, on the part of God, to deliver to you the doctrine of eternal life.”

**Verse 27. *And as he talked with him***— Cornelius had met Peter at some short distance from his house, and they conversed together till they went in.

**Verse 28. *Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing***, etc.— He addressed the whole company, among whom, it appears, there were persons well acquainted with Jewish customs; probably some of them were Jewish proselytes.

***But God hath showed me***, etc.— He now began to understand the import of the vision which he saw at Joppa. A Gentile is not to be avoided because he is a Gentile; God is now taking down the partition wall which separated them from the Jews.

**Verse 29. *I ask-for what intent ye have sent for me?***— Peter had been informed of this by the servants of Cornelius, Acts 10:22; but, as all the company might not have been informed of the circumstances, he, as it were, invites him to tell his story afresh, that his friends, etc., might be the

better prepared to receive the truth, which he was about to dispense, in obedience to his Divine commission.

**Verse 30. *Four days ago I was fasting until this hour***— It was then about three o'clock in the afternoon; and it appears that Cornelius had continued his fasts from three o'clock the preceding day to three o'clock the day following; not that he had fasted four days together, as some supposes for even if he did fast four days consecutively, he ate one meal on each day. It is however necessary to remark that the word *νηστευων*, fasting is wanting in ABC, one other; the Coptic, AETHiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate; but it has not been omitted in any edition of the Greek Testament.

**Verse 31. *Thy prayer is heard***— See the note on Acts 10:4. Cornelius prayed, fasted, and gave alms. It was in this way he looked for salvation; not to purchase it: a thought of this kind does not appear to have entered into his mind; but these were the means he used to get his soul brought to the knowledge of the truth. The reader must recollect that in the case of Cornelius there was no open vision; he used the light and power which God had already given; and behold how mightily God increased his gifts! He that hath, i.e., that uses what he has, shall receive; and no man can expect any increase of light or life, who does not improve the grace already given.

**Verse 33. *Are we all here present before God***— Instead of before GOD, the Codex Bezae, Syriac, AETHiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate, read before THEE. The people were all waiting for the preacher, and every heart was filled with expectation; they waited as before God, from whose messenger they were about to hear the words of life.

**Verse 34. *God is no respecter of persons***— He does God esteem a Jew, because he is a Jew; nor does he detest a Gentile because he is a Gentile. It was a long and deeply rooted opinion among the Jews, that God never would extend his favor to the Gentiles; and that the descendants of Jacob only should enjoy his peculiar favor and benediction. Of this opinion was St. Peter, previously to the heavenly vision mentioned in this chapter. He was now convinced that God was no respecter of persons; that as all must stand before his judgment seat, to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, so no one nation, or people, or individual, could expect to find a

more favorable decision than another who was precisely in the same moral state; for the phrase, respect of persons, is used in reference to unjust decisions in a court of justice, where, through favor, or interest, or bribe, a culprit is acquitted, and a righteous or innocent person condemned. See Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:16, 17; 16:19. And as there is no iniquity (decisions contrary to equity) with God, so he could not shut out the pious prayers, sincere fasting, and benevolent alms-giving of Cornelius; because the very spring whence they proceeded was his own grace and mercy. Therefore he could not receive even a Jew into his favor (in preference to such a person) who had either abused his grace, or made a less godly use of it than this Gentile had done.

**Verse 35.** *But in every nation he that feared him*, etc.— In every nation he who, according to his light and privileges, fears God, worships him alone, (for this is the true meaning of the word,) and worketh righteousness, abstains from all evil, gives to all their due, injures neither the body, soul, nor reputation of his neighbor, is accepted with him. It is not therefore the nation, kindred, profession, mode or form of worship, that the just God regards; but the character, the state of heart, and the moral deportment. For what are professions, etc., in the sight of that God who trieth spirits, and by whom actions are weighed! He looks for the grace he has given, the advantages he has afforded, and the improvement of all these. Let it be observed farther, that no man can be accepted with this just God who does not live up to the advantages of the state in which providence has placed him. Why was Cornelius accepted with God while thousands of his countrymen were passed by? Because he did not receive the grace of God in vain; he watched, fasted, prayed, and gave alms, which they did not. Had he not done so, would he have been accepted? Certainly not; because it would then appear that he had received the grace of God in vain, and had not been a worker together with him. Many irreligious men, in order to get rid of the duties and obligations of Christianity, quote this verse in their own favor, while they reject all the Gospel besides; and roundly assert, as they think on the authority of this text, that they need neither believe in Jesus Christ, attend to his Gospel, nor use his ordinances; for, if they fear God and work righteousness, they shall be infallibly accepted with him. Let such know that if they had been born and still were living in a land where the light of the Gospel had never shone,

and were there conscientiously following the glimmering ray of celestial light which God had granted, they might, with some show of reason, speak in this way; but, as they are born and live under the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God, the just Judge, will require that they fear him, and work righteousness, ACCORDING to the LIGHT afforded by that very GOSPEL. The sincerity, watching, praying, fastings and alms-giving of Cornelius will not be sufficient for them who, as it may be justly said, live in splendours of Christianity. In such a state, God requires that a man shall love him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength; and his neighbor as himself. In the face of such a requisition as this, how will the poor heathen virtue of one born in the pale of Christianity appear? And if God requires all this, will not a man need all the grace that has been brought to light by the revelation of Jesus Christ to enable him to do it?

**Verse 36.** *The word which God sent*, etc.— Few verses in the New Testament have perplexed critics and divines more than this. The ancient copyists seem also to have been puzzled with it; as the great variety in the different MSS. sufficiently proves. A foreign critic makes a good sense by connecting this with the preceding verse, thus: In every nation he that feared him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him, according to that doctrine which God sent unto the children of Israel, by which he published peace (i.e. reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles) by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all; and, because Lord of all, both of Jews and Gentiles, therefore he must be impartial; and, because impartial, or no respecter of persons, therefore, in every nation, whether Judea, Greece, or Italy, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

I believe **τον λογου**, the word, in this verse, should be translated, that doctrine; and probably **ρημα**, which we translate that word in Acts 10:37, should be omitted as it is in the Codex Bezae, and its Itala version; and if **ov**, which is in Acts 10:36, be even left out, as it is in ABC, Coptic and Vulgate, the whole may be literally read thus: As to the doctrine sent to the children of Israel, preaching the glad tidings of peace (**ευαγγελιζομενος ειρηνην**) by Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all, ye know what was done (**το γενομενον**) through all Judea, beginning after the baptism which John preached. Jesus, who was from Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with mighty power (**δυναμει**) went

about doing good, and healing all that were tyrannically oppressed (καταδυναστευομενους) by the devil, for God was with him. Critics have proposed a great variety of modes by which they suppose these verses may be rendered intelligible; and the learned reader may see many in Wolfius, Kypke, Rosenmuller, and others. Kypke contends that the word κυριος, Lord, is to be understood adjectively, and ought to be referred to λογος, and the 36th verse will then stand thus: The word which he sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, that word has authority over all. This amounts nearly to the same sense with the expositions given above; and all proclaim this truth, which the apostle labored to establish, namely, that God intended the salvation of all men by Jesus Christ; and therefore proclaimed reconciliation to all, by him who is Lord, maker, preserver, redeemer, and judge of all. And of this the apostle was now more convinced by the late vision; and his mission from him who is Lord of all to Cornelius, a heathen, was a full illustration of the heavenly truth; for the very meeting of Peter, once a prejudiced Jew, and Cornelius, once an unenlightened Gentile, was a sort of first fruits of this general reconciliation, and a proof that Jesus was LORD of ALL.

**Verse 37. *That word-ye know***— This account of Jesus of Nazareth ye cannot be unacquainted with; because it has been proclaimed throughout all Judea and Galilee, from the time that John began to preach. Ye have heard how he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and of the miracles which he performed; how he went about doing good, and healing all kinds of demoniacs and, by these mighty and beneficent acts, giving the fullest proof that God was with him. This was the exordium of Peter's discourse; and thus he begins, from what they knew, to teach them what they did not know.

St. Peter does not intimate that any miracle was wrought by Christ previously to his being baptized by John. Beginning at Galilee. Let us review the mode of Christ's manifestation. 1. After he had been baptized by John, he went into the desert, and remained there forty days. 2. He then returned to the Baptist, who was exercising his ministry at that time at Bethany or Bethabara; and there he made certain disciples, viz., Andrew, Bartholomew, Peter, and Philip. 3. Thence he went to the marriage at Cana, in Galilee, where he wrought his first miracle. 4. And afterwards he went to Capernaum

in the same country, by the sea of Galilee, where he wrought many others. This was the manner in which Christ manifested himself; and these are the facts of which Peter presumes they had a perfect knowledge, because they had been for a long time notorious through all the land.

**Verse 38. *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth***— Here the apostle refers to Christ as the promised Messiah; for, as Messiah signifies the anointed one, and Christ has the same signification in Greek, and the Messiah, according to the prophets, and the expectation of the Jews, was to work miracles, Peter proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, and refers to the miracles which he wrought as the proof of it. This delicate, but forcible allusion is lost by most readers.

**Verse 39. *We are witnesses of all***— In this speech St. Peter may refer, not only to the twelve apostles, but to the six brethren whom he had brought with him.

***Whom they slew***— As the truth of the resurrection must depend on the reality of the death of Christ, it was necessary that this should be stated, and shown to rest on the most indubitable evidence.

**Verse 40. *Him God raised up the third day***— He lay long enough under the power of death to prove that he was dead; and not too long, lest it should be supposed that his disciples had time sufficient to have practiced some deceit or imposture; and, to prevent this, the Jews took care to have the tomb well guarded during the whole time which he lay there.

**Verse 41. *Not to all the people***— In the order of Divine providence, the public were to be no longer instructed by Jesus Christ personally; but it was necessary that those who were to preach redemption in his name should be thoroughly furnished to this good and great work; therefore, the time he spent on earth, after his resurrection, was devoted to the instruction of his disciples.

***Witnesses chosen before of God***— That is, God chose such men to attest this fact as were every way best qualified to give evidence on the subject; persons who were always to be found; who might at all times be confronted with those, if any such should offer themselves, who could pretend to prove that there was any imposture in this case; and persons



who, from the very circumstances in which they were placed, must appear to have an absolute conviction of the truth of all they attested. The first preachers of the Gospel must be the witnesses of its facts; and these first preachers must be put in such circumstances as to demonstrate, not only that they had no secular end in view, nor indeed could have any, but also that they should be able to evince that they had the fullest conviction of the reality of the eternal world, and of their Master's existence in glory there; as they carried their lives continually in their hands, and regarded them not, so that they might fulfill the ministry which they had received from their Lord, and finish their course with joy.

But why was not Christ, after his resurrection, shown to all the people! 1. Because it was impossible that such a thing could be done without mob and tumult. Let it only be announced, "Here is the man who was dead three days, and who is risen from the dead!" what confusion would be the consequence of such an exposure! Some would say, This is he; others, He is like him; and so on; and the valid testimony must be lost in the confusion of the multitude. 2. God chose such witnesses whose testimony should be unimpeachable; the men who knew him best, and who by their depositions in proof of the fact should evidently risk their lives. And, 3. as multitudes are never called to witness any fact, but a few selected from the rest, whose knowledge is most accurate, and whose veracity is unquestionable, therefore, God showed not Christ risen from the dead to all the people, but to witnesses chosen by himself; and they were such as perfectly knew him before, and who ate and drank with him after his resurrection, and consequently had the fullest proof and conviction of the truth of this fact.

**Verse 42.** *And he commanded us to preach*— By thus assuring them that Jesus Christ was appointed to judge the world, he at once showed them the necessity of subjection to him, that they might stand in the day of his appearing.

*The Judge of quick and dead.*— The word quick we retain from our ancient mother tongue, the Saxon (Anglo-Saxon), to live, hence (Anglo-Saxon) and (Anglo-Saxon), life, and (Anglo-Saxon), grass; and from this our quicks, quick-set hedges, fences made of living thorns, etc. By

quick and dead we are to understand: 1. All that had lived from the foundation of the world till that time; and all that were then alive. 2. All that should be found alive at the day of judgment, as well as all that had died previously.

**Verse 43. *To him give all the prophets witness***— See Isaiah 9:6; 52:7; 53:5, 6; 59:20; Jeremiah 31:34; Daniel 9:24; Micah 7:18, etc.; and Zechariah 13:1. As Jesus Christ was the sum and substance of the law and the Mosaic dispensation, so all the prophets bore testimony, either directly or indirectly, to him; and, indeed, without him and the salvation he has promised, there is scarcely any meaning in the Mosaic economy, nor in most of the allusions of the prophets.

***Remission of sins.***— The phrase, *αφεσις αμαρτιων*, means simply the taking away of sins; and this does not refer to the guilt of sin merely, but also to its power, nature, and consequences. All that is implied in pardon of sin, destruction of its tyranny, and purification from its pollution, is here intended; and it is wrong to restrict such operations of mercy to pardon alone.

**Verse 44. *While Peter yet spake***— It is not very likely that the words recorded by St. Luke are all that the apostle spoke on this occasion; but, while he continued to discourse with them on this subject, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word; and his descent was known by their being enabled to speak with different kinds of tongues. In what manner this gift was bestowed we cannot tell; probably it was in the same way in which it had been given on the day of pentecost; for as they spake with tongues, which was the effect of the descent of the Spirit as flaming tongues on the heads of the disciples on the day of pentecost, it is very likely that the same appearance now took place.

**Verse 45. *They of the circumcision-were astonished***— Because it was a maxim with them that the Shechinah or Divine influence could not be revealed to any person who dwelt beyond the precincts of the promised land. Nor did any of them believe that the Divine Spirit could be communicated to any Gentile. It is no wonder, therefore, that they were amazed when they saw the Spirit of God so liberally given as it was on this occasion.

**Verse 46. *And magnify God.***— They had got new hearts as well as new tongues; and, having believed with the heart unto righteousness, their tongues made confession unto salvation; and God was magnified for the mercy which he had imparted.

**Verse 47. *Can any man forbid water***— These had evidently received the Holy Ghost, and consequently were become members of the mystical body of Christ; and yet St. Peter requires that they shall receive baptism by water, that they might become members of the Christian Church. In other cases, they received baptism first, and the Spirit afterwards by the imposition of hands: see Acts 19:4-6, where the disciples who had received only the baptism of John were baptized again with water in the name of the Lord Jesus; and, after even this, the apostles prayed, and laid their hands on them, before they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. So we find that Jesus Christ had his water baptism as well as John; and that even he who gave the baptism of the Holy Ghost required the administration of water baptism also. Therefore the baptism of the Spirit did not supersede the baptism by water; nor indeed can it; as baptism, as well as the supper of our Lord, were intended, not only to be means of grace, but standing, irrefragable proofs of the truth of Christianity.

**Verse 48. *To be baptized in the name of the Lord.***— That is, in the name of Jesus Christ; which implied their taking upon them the public profession of Christianity, and believing on Christ Jesus as their Savior and Sovereign; for, as they were baptized in his name, they professed thereby to be his disciples and followers.

***Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.***— They felt the necessity of farther instruction, and prayed him to continue his ministry a little longer among them; and to this he no doubt consented. This was properly speaking, the commencement of the Christian Church, as composed of Jews and Gentiles, partaking of the same baptism, united under the same Head, made partakers of the same Spirit, and associated in the same aggregate body. Now was the middle wall of partition broken down, and the Gentiles admitted to the same privileges with the Jews.

1. GOD is wonderful in all his works, whether they be works of creation, providence, or grace. Every thing proclaims his power, his wisdom, and his goodness. Every where we learn this truth, which is indispensably

necessary for all to know who desire to acknowledge God in all their ways that “there is nothing which concerns their present or eternal welfare in which God does not interest himself.” We often, to our great spiritual detriment, lose sight of this truth, because we think that the MAJESTY of God is too great to be occupied with those common occurrences by which we are often much affected, in things which relate, not only to our present, but also to our eternal interests. This is impossible; for God is our father, and, being every where present, he sees our state, and his eye affects his heart.

2. Let the reader examine the chain of Providence (composed indeed of very minute links) brought to light in the conversion of Cornelius, the instruction of Peter, and opening the door of faith to the Gentiles, and he will be convinced that “God has way every where, and that all things serve the purposes of his will.” We have already seen how particularly, both by gracious and providential workings, God prepared the mind of Cornelius to receive instruction, and the mind of Peter to give it; so that the receiver and giver were equally ready to be workers together with God. This is a general economy. He who feels his want may rest assured that, even then, God has made the necessary provisions for his supply; and that the very sense of the want is a proof that the provision is already made. Why then should we lose time in deploring wretchedness, for the removal of which God has made the necessary preparations? Mourning over our miseries will never supply the lack of faith in Christ, and very seldom tends even to humble the heart.

3. As the eye of God is ever upon us, he knows our trials as well as our wants; and here, also, he makes the necessary provision for our support. We may be called to suffer, but his grace will be sufficient for us; and, as our troubles increase, so shall the means of our support. And even these trials and temptations will be pressed into our service, for all things work together for good to them that love God, Romans 8:28.

4. We must beware neither to despise outward rites in religion, nor to rest in them. Most people do either the one or the other. God gives us outward helps, because he knows we need them. But do we not sometimes imagine ourselves to be above that which, because of our scantiness of grace, is really above us? We certainly may over-rate ourselves, and under-rate

God's bounties. He who is taught by the Spirit of God will be saved from both.

## CHAPTER 11.

*Peter returns to Jerusalem, and is accused of having associated with the Gentiles, 1-3. He defends himself by relating at large the whole business concerning Cornelius, 4-17. His defense is accepted, and the whole Church glorifies God for having granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life, 18. An account of the proceedings of those who were scattered abroad by the persecution that was raised about Stephen; and how they had spread the Gospel among the circumcision, in Phoenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, 19-21. The Church at Jerusalem, hearing of this, sends Barnabas to confirm them in the faith, 22, 23. His character, 24. He goes to Tarsus to seek Saul, whom he brings to Antioch, where the disciples are first called CHRISTIANS, 25, 26. Certain prophets foretell the dearth which afterwards took place in the reign of the Emperor Claudias, 27, 28. The disciples send relief to their poor brethren to Judea, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, 29. 30.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11.

**Verse 1.** *And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea*— According to Calmet, Judea is here put in opposition to Caesarea, which, though situated in Palestine, passed for a Greek city, being principally inhabited by Pagans, Greeks, or Syrians.

**Verse 2.** *Contended with him*— A manifest proof this that the primitive Church at Jerusalem (and no Church can ever deserve this name but the Jerusalem Church) had no conception of St. Peter's supremacy, or of his being prince of the apostles. He is now called to account for his conduct, which they judged to be reprehensible; and which they would not have attempted to do had they believed him to be Christ's vicar upon earth, and the infallible Head of the Church. But this absurd dream is every where refuted in the New Testament.

**Verse 3.** *Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised*— In a Jew, this was no small offense; and, as they did not know the reason of St. Peter's conduct, it is no wonder they should call him to account for it, as they considered it

to be a positive transgression of the law and custom of the Jews. There is a remarkable addition here in the Codex Bezae, which it will be well to notice. The second verse of the chapter begins thus: —

Now Peter had a desire for a considerable time to go to Jerusalem: and having spoken to the brethren, and confirmed them, speaking largely, he taught them through the countries, (i.e. as he passed to Jerusalem,) and, as he met them, he spoke to them of the grace of God. But the brethren who were of the circumcision disputed with him, saying, etc.

**Verse 4. *But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order***— *ἐξέτιθετο αυτοῖς καθέξης*. This is the very style of St. Luke; see his Gospel, Luke 1:3. To remove their prejudice, and to give them the fullest reasons for his conduct, he thought it best to give them a simple relation of the whole affair; which he does, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, with a few additional circumstances here. See the notes before.

**Verse 12. *These six brethren***— Probably pointing to them, being present, as proper persons to confirm the truth of what he was delivering.

**Verse 14. *Thou and all thy house shall be saved.***— This is an additional circumstance: before, it was said, Acts 10:6, Peter shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do; and, in Acts 10:32, who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. But, in Peter's relation, the matter is more explicitly declared, he shall tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved. He shall announce to you all the doctrine of salvation.

**Verse 16. *Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.***— These words are very remarkable. The words of our Lord, as quoted Acts 1:5, to which St. Peter refers here, have been supposed by many to be referred to the apostles alone; but here it is evident that St. Peter believed they were a promise made to all Christians, i.e. to all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who should believe on Jesus Christ. Therefore, when he saw that the Holy Ghost fell upon those Gentiles, he considered it a fulfillment of our Lord's promise: ye, that is, all that will believe on me, shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost—not many days hence, i.e. in a short time this Spirit shall be given, which is to abide with you for ever. Hence we learn that the promise

of the Holy Spirit is given to the whole body of Christians—to all that believe on Christ as dying for their sins, and rising for their justification.

**Verse 17.** *God gave them the like gift*, etc.— Viz. the Holy Spirit, and its various gifts and graces, in the same way and in the same measure in which he gave them to us Jews. What was I, that I could withstand God? It was not I who called them to salvation: it was God; and the thing is proved to be from God alone, for none other could dispense the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 18.** *They held their peace*— Their prejudices were confounded; they considered the subject, and saw that it was from God; then they glorified him, because they saw that he had granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life. As the word *μετανοια*, which we translate repentance, signifies literally a change of mind, it may be here referred to a change of religious views, etc. And as repentance signifies a change of life and conduct, from evil to good, so the word *μετανοια* may be used here to signify a change from a false religion to the true one; from idolatry, to the worship of the true God. Rosenmuller thinks that, in several cases, where it is spoken of the Jews, it signifies their change from a contempt of the Messiah to reverence for him, and the consequent embracing of the Christian religion.

The Christians who were present were all satisfied with St. Peter's account and apology; but it does not appear that all were ultimately satisfied, as we know there were serious disputes in the Church afterwards on this very subject: see Acts 15:5, etc., where Christian believers, from among the Pharisees, insisted that it was necessary to circumcise the converted Gentiles, and cause them to keep the law of Moses. This opinion was carried much farther in the Church at Jerusalem afterwards, as may be seen at large in Acts 21:21, etc.

**Verse 19.** *The persecution that arose about Stephen*— That is, those who were obliged to flee from Jerusalem at the time of that persecution in which Stephen lost his life. See Acts 8:1.

**Phoenice**— Phoenicia, a country between Galilee and Syria, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, including Tyre, Sidon, etc. It is often mentioned as a part of Syria. See Acts 21:2, 3.



**Cyprus**— An island of the Mediterranean Sea, over against Syria. See on Acts 4:30.

**Antioch**— A city of Syria, built by Antiochus Seleucus, near the river Orontes; at that time one of the most celebrated cities of the east. For the situation of all these, see the map accompanying this book.

**Unto the Jews only**.— For they knew nothing of the vision of St. Peter; and did not believe that God would open the door of faith to the Gentiles. The next verse informs us that there were others who were better instructed. See below.

**Verse 20. Men of-Cyrene**— The metropolis of the Cyrenaica; a country of Africa, bounded on the east by Marmarica, on the west by the Regio Syrtica, on the north by the Mediterranean, and on the south by the Sahara. Cyrene is now called Cairoan. This city, according to Eusebius, was built in the 37th Olympiad, about 630 years before Christ. In consequence of a revolt of its inhabitants, it was destroyed by the Romans; but they afterwards rebuilt it. It was for a long time subject to the Arabs, but is now in the hands of the Turks.

**Spake unto the Grecians**— ἑλληνιστας, The Hellenists. Who these were, we have already seen Acts 6 and Acts 9:29, viz. Jews living in Greek cities and speaking the Greek language. But, instead of ἑλληνιστας, Grecians, ἑλληνας, Greeks, is the reading of AD\*, Syriac, all the Arabic, Coptic, AEthiopic, Vulgate, some copies of the Itala, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and OEcumenius. On this evidence, Griesbach has admitted it into the text; and few critics entertain any doubt of the genuineness of the reading. This intimates that, besides preaching the Gospel to the Hellenistic Jews, some of them preached it to heathen Greeks; for, were we to adopt the common reading, it would be a sort of actum agere; for it is certain that the Hellenistic Jews had already received the Gospel. See Acts 6:1. And it is likely that these Cyprians and Cyrenians had heard of Peter's mission to Caesarea, and they followed his example by offering the Christian faith to the heathen. It is worthy of remark that the Jews generally called all nations of the world Greeks; as the Asiatics, to the present day, call all the nations of Europe Franks.

**Verse 21. *The hand of the Lord was with them***— By the hand, arm, and, finger of God, in the Scripture, different displays or exertions of his power are intended. Here it means that the energy of God accompanied them, and applied their preaching to the souls of all attentive hearers. Without this accompanying influence, even an apostle could do no good; and can inferior men hope to be able to convince and convert sinners without this?

Ministers of the word of God, so called, who dispute the necessity and deny the being of this influence, show thereby that they are intruders into God's heritage; that they are not sent by him, and shall not profit the people at all.

***A great number believed***— That Jesus was the Christ; and that he had died for their offenses, and risen again for their justification. Because the apostles preached the truth, and the hand of God was with them, therefore, a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord, becoming his disciples, and taking him for their portion.

**Verse 22. *The Church which was in Jerusalem***— This was the original, the mother Church of Christianity; not the Church of Rome; there were Christian Churches founded in many places, which exist to the present day, before Rome heard the Gospel of the kingdom. A Christian Church means a company of believers in Christ Jesus, united for the purposes of Christian fellowship, and edification in righteousness.

***They sent forth Barnabas***— It seems, then, that the Church collectively had power to commission and send forth any of its own members, whom it saw God had qualified for a particular work. There must have been, even at that time, an acknowledged superiority of some members of the Church beyond others. The apostles held the first rank; the deacons (probably the same as those called prophets, as being next chosen) the second; and perhaps those called evangelists, simply preachers of the truth, the third rank. Those who knew most of God and sacred things, who were most zealous, most holy, and most useful, undoubtedly had the pre-eminence.

**Verse 23. *Had seen the grace of God***— That is, had seen the effects produced by the grace of God. By the grace of God, we are to understand: 1. His favor. 2. The manifestations of that favor in the communication of spiritual blessings. And, 3. Principles of light, life, holiness, etc., producing effects demonstrative of the causes from which they sprung. Barnabas saw

that these people were objects of the Divine approbation; that they were abundantly blessed and edified together as a Christian Church; and that they had received especial influences from God, by his indwelling Spirit, which were to them incentives to faith, hope, and love, and also principles of conduct.

*Was glad*,— Not envious because God had blessed the labors of others of his Master's servants, but rejoiced to find that the work of salvation was carried on by such instruments as God chose, and condescended to use. They who cannot rejoice in the conversion of sinners, because they have not been the means of it, or because such converts or their ministers have not precisely the same views of certain doctrines which they have themselves, show that they have little, if any thing, of the mind that was in Christ, in them.

*With purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*.— These converts had begun well; they must continue and persevere: God gave them the grace, the principle of life and action; it was their business to use this. If they did not, the gift would be resumed. Barnabas well knew that they must have the grace of God in them to enable them to do any good; but he knew, also, that its being in them did not necessarily imply that it must continue there. God had taught him that if they were not workers together with that grace they would receive it in vain; i.e., the end for which it was given would not be answered. He therefore exhorted them, **τη προθεσει της καρδιας**, with determination of heart, with set, fixed purpose and resolution, that they would cleave unto the Lord, **προσμενειν τω κυριω**, to remain with the Lord; to continue in union and fellowship with him; to be faithful in keeping his truth, and obedient in the practice of it. To be a Christian is to be united to Christ, to be of one spirit with him: to continue to be a Christian is to continue in that union. It is absurd to talk of being children of God, and of absolute, final perseverance, when the soul has lost its spiritual union. There is no perseverance but in cleaving to the Lord: he who in his works denies him does not cleave to him. Such a one is not of God; if he ever had the salvation of God, he has lost it; he is fallen from grace; nor is there a word in the book of God, fairly and honestly understood, that says such a person shall absolutely and unavoidably arise from his fall.

**Verse 24. *For he was a good man***— Here is a proper character of a minister of the Gospel.

1. He is a good man: his bad heart is changed; his evil dispositions rooted out; and the mind that was in Christ implanted in him.

2. He is full of the Holy Ghost. He is holy, because the Spirit of holiness dwells in him: he has not a few transient visitations or drawings from that Spirit; it is a resident in his soul, and it fills his heart. It is light in his understanding; it is discrimination in his judgment; it is fixed purpose and determination in righteousness in his will; it is purity, it is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, and fidelity in his affections and passions. In a word, it has sovereign sway in his heart; it governs all passions, and is the motive and principle of every righteous action.

3. He was full of faith. He implicitly credited his Lord; he knew that he could not lie—that his word could not fail; he expected, not only the fulfillment of all promises, but also every degree of help, light, life, and comfort, which God might at any time see necessary for his Church, he prayed for the Divine blessing, and he believed that he should not pray in vain. His faith never failed, because it laid hold on that God who could not change. Behold, ye preachers of the Gospel! an original minister of Christ. Emulate his piety, his faith, and his usefulness.

***Much people was added unto the Lord.***— No wonder, when they had such a minister, preaching by the power of the Holy Ghost, such a Gospel as that of Jesus Christ.

**Verse 25. *To Tarsus, for to seek Saul***— The persecution raised against him obliged him to take refuge in his own city, where, as a Roman citizen, his person was in safety. See Acts 9:29, 30.

**Verse 26. *He brought him unto Antioch***— As this city was the metropolis of Syria, and the third city for importance in the whole Roman empire, Rome and Alexandria alone being more eminent, Barnabas might think it expedient to have for his assistance a person of such eminent talents as Saul; and who was especially appointed by Christ to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles. Saul appears also to have been a thorough master of the Greek tongue, and, consequently, the better qualified to explain the Gospel to the Greek philosophers, and to defend it against

their cavils. Barnabas, also being a native of Cyprus, Acts 4:36, where the Greek language was spoken, was judged to be proper for this mission, perhaps on this account, as well as on account of his disinterestedness, holiness, and zeal.

*And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*— It is evident they had the name Christians from CHRIST their master; as the Platonists and Pythagoreans had their name from their masters, Plato and Pythagoras. Now, as these had their name from those great masters because they attended their teaching, and credited their doctrines, so the disciples were called Christians because they took Christ for their teacher, crediting his doctrines, and following the rule of life laid down by him. It has been a question, by whom was this name given to the disciples? Some think they assumed it; others, that the inhabitants of Antioch gave it to them; and others, that it was given by Saul and Barnabas. This later opinion is favored by the Codex Bezae, which reads the 25th and 26th verses thus: And hearing that Saul was at Tarsus, he departed, seeking for him; and having found him, he besought him to come to Antioch; who, when they were come, assembled with the Church a whole year, and instructed a great number; and there they first called the disciples at Antioch Christians.

The word *χρηματισαι* in our common text, which we translate were called, signifies in the New Testament, to appoint, warn, or nominate, by Divine direction. In this sense, the word is used, Matthew 2:12; Luke 2:26; and in the preceding chapter of this book, Acts 10:22. If, therefore, the name was given by Divine appointment, it is as most likely that Saul and Barnabas were directed to give it; and that, therefore, the name Christian is from God, as well as that grace and holiness which are so essentially required and implied in the character. Before this time, the Jewish converts were simply called, among themselves, disciples, i.e. scholars; believers, saints, the Church, or assembly; and, by their enemies, Nazarenes, Galileans, the men of this way or sect; and perhaps lay other names which are not come down to us. They considered themselves as one family; and hence the appellation of brethren was frequent among them. It was the design of God to make all who believed of one heart and one soul, that they might consider him as their Father, and live and love like children of the same household. A Christian, therefore, is the highest character which any human being can bear upon earth; and to receive it from God, as those

appear to have done—how glorious the title! It is however worthy of remark that this name occurs in only three places in the New Testament: here, and in Acts 26:28, and in 1 Peter 4:16.

**Verse 27. *Came prophets from Jerusalem***— Though the term prophet is used in the New Testament simply to signify a teacher, (see the note on Genesis 20:7, where the subject is largely explained,) yet here it evidently means also such as are under Divine inspiration, and foretold future events. This was certainly the case with Agabus, Acts 11:28, though, perhaps, his ordinary character was that of a teacher or preacher. It seems from various scriptures, Romans 12:4, etc., 1 Corinthians 13:2-14:40, that the prophets of the New Testament were: 1. Teachers or preachers in general. 2. Persons who, on special occasions, were under the influence of the Divine Spirit, and then foretold certain future events. 3. Persons who recited hymns to the honor of God in the public assemblies of the Christians. 4. Persons who prayed in those assemblies, having sometimes the gift of tongues, at other times not. From Ephesians 2:20; 3:5, we learn that the prophets of the Christian Church were inferior to the apostles; but, from Ephesians 4:11, we see that they were superior to all other teachers, even to evangelists and pastors.

**Verse 28. *Agabus***— This prophet, of whom we know nothing, is once more mentioned, Acts 21:10. He was probably a Jew, but whether converted now to Christianity we cannot tell.

***Great dearth throughout all the world***— The words εφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην probably here mean the land of Judea; though sometimes by this phrase the whole Roman empire is intended. In the former sense the disciples appear to have understood it, as the next verse informs us; for they determined to send relief to their brethren in Judea, which they could not have done had the famine been general. It does not appear that they expected it to extend even to Antioch in Syria, where they then were, else they would have thought of making provision for themselves.

It is well known from history that there were several famines in the reign of Claudius. Dion Cassius, lib. lx., mentions a severe famine in the first and second year of the reign of Claudius, which was sorely felt in Rome itself. This famine, it is supposed, induced Claudius to build a port at Ostia, for the more regular supply of Rome with provisions.

A second famine happened about the fourth year of this reign, which continued for several years, and greatly afflicted the land of Judea. Several authors notice this, but particularly Josephus, *Ant. lib. xx. cap. 5, sect. 2*, where, having mentioned Tiberius Alexander as succeeding to the procuratorship in the place of Cuspius Fadus, he says that, “during the government of these procurators, a great famine afflicted Judea.” **ἐπι τουτοις δη και τον μεγαν λιμον κατα την ιουδαιαν συνεβη γενεσθαι.**

A third famine is mentioned by Eusebius, in *An. Abrahami*, which commences with the calends of October, A.D. 48, which was so powerful “in Greece that a modius (about half a bushel of grain) was sold for six drachms,” about three shillings and sixpence English. *Vid. Euseb. in Chron. edit. Scalig.* The same author mentions another famine in Rome, in the tenth year of Claudius, of which Orosius gives the details, *lib. vii.*

A fourth famine, which took place in the eleventh year of Claudius, is mentioned by Tacitus, *Annal. lib. xii. sect. 43*, in which there was so great a dearth of provisions, and famine in consequence, that it was esteemed a Divine judgment. *Frugrum quoque egestas, et orta ex ea fames, in prodigium accipiebatur.* At this time, the same author tells us, that in all the stores of Rome there were no more than fifteen days’ provision; and, had not the winter been uncommonly mild, the utmost distress and misery must have prevailed.

It may now be inquired, to which of these famines in the reign of Claudius does the prophecy of Agabus refer? Most learned men are of opinion that the famine of which Agabus prophesied was that mentioned above, which took place in the fourth year of this emperor. A.D. 47. This famine is particularly mentioned by Josephus, *Ant. lib. xx. cap. 2, sect. 5*, who describes it as “a very great famine, in which many died for want of food.”—“That Helena, queen of Adiabene, who had embraced the Jewish religion, sent some of her servants to Alexandria, to buy a great quantity of corn; and others of them to Cyprus, to buy a cargo of dried figs, which she distributed to those who were in want.” And in *cap. 5, sect. 2*, he says that this happened” when Tiberius Alexander succeeded Cuspids Fadus; and that under these procurators the famine

happened in which Queen Helena, at a vast expense, procured relief to the Jews.” Dr. Hudson’s note on this passage in Josephus deserves to be copied: “This,” says he, “is that famine foretold by Agabus, Acts 11:28, which happened when Claudius was consul the fourth time, (A.D. 47,) and not that which happened when Claudius was consul the second time, and Caecina was his colleague, (A.D. 42,) as Scaliger says, upon Eusebius, p. 174. Now when Josephus had said, a little after, cap. 5, sect. 2, that Tiberius Alexander succeeded Cuspius Fadus as procurator, he immediately subjoins, under these procurators there happened a great famine in Judea.” From this it is evident that this famine must have continued several years, as it existed under both these procurators. Fadus, says Mr. Whiston, was not sent into Judea till after the death of Agrippa, i.e. towards the end of the fourth year of Claudius, in the end of A.D. 44, or beginning of 45. So that this famine, foretold by Agabus, happened on the fifth, sixth, and seventh years of Claudius, A.D. 45, 46, and 47. See Whiston’s Josephus; and see Krebs’ Observat. in Nov. Test. on this place.

**Verse 29. *Then the disciples-determined to send relief***— These were probably Gentile converts; and as they considered themselves receiving the spiritual blessings, which they now so happily enjoyed, through the means of the Christians in Judea, they resolved to communicate to them a portion of their temporal goods; and every man did this according to his ability, i.e. he gave a certain proportion of the property with which the providence of God had entrusted him. The community of goods had for some time ceased.

**Verse 30. *And sent it to the elders***— These probably mean those who first believed on Christ crucified, either of the seventy disciples mentioned Luke, Luke 10:1, or the one hundred and twenty mentioned, Acts 1:15, or the seven deacons, Acts 6:5. Some have divided the primitive disciples into three classes: 1. The **αυτοπται**, those who were eye witnesses. 2. The **απαρχαι**, those who were the first fruits, or converts of the apostles’ preaching. The **διαδοχοι**, those who were the successors of the preceding from whom they had received the doctrines of the Gospel. It is likely the deacons are meant, whose office it was to take care of the poor. See Acts 6:1, etc.



1. AMONG many highly interesting subjects which have come under review in the preceding chapter, we must have particularly noticed, 1. The care the Church of Christ took to have young converts confirmed in the truths they had received, and built up on their most holy faith, Acts 11:22. It was indispensably necessary that a foundation should be laid; and it was not less so that a proper superstructure should be raised. For this work, it was requisite that different gifts and talents should be employed, and Barnabas and Saul must be sent to confirm in the faith those whom the disciples, who had been scattered by the persecution raised about Stephen, had converted to Christ, Acts 11:19-22. It is a great thing to have souls converted to the Lord; it is greater to have them built up on their most holy faith; and few persons, even among the ministers of Christ, have talents for both. Even when PAUL planted, it required APOLLOS to water. A frequent interchange of godly ministers in the Church of Christ is of the utmost consequence to its stability and increase.

2. It appears that CHRISTIANS was the first general appellative of the followers of our blessed Lord; and there is presumptive evidence, as we have seen, that this appellative came by Divine appointment. How very few of those who profess this religion are satisfied with this title! That very Church that arrogates all to itself has totally abandoned this title, and its members call themselves Roman Catholics, which is absurd; because the adjective and substantive include opposite ideas: catholic signifies universal; and Roman signifies of or belonging to Rome. If it be merely Roman, it cannot be catholic; if it be catholic, it cannot be confined to Rome; but it is not catholic nor universal, in any sense of the word, for it contains but a small part of the people who profess Christianity. The term Protestant has more common sense in it; but not much more piety. Almost all sects and parties proceed in the same line; but Christian is a title seldom heard of, and the spirit and practice of Christianity but rarely occur. When all return to the spirit of the Gospel, they will probably resume the appellative of Christians.

3. An early fruit of Christianity was mercy to the poor; and especially to the poor followers of Christ. He has left the poor ever with us, as his representatives, to exercise our bowels of commiseration, and thus teach us to feel and practice mercy. To every man professing Christianity, the religion of Jesus Christ says most authoritatively, With every man who is

pinched by poverty, share what the providence of God has not made absolutely necessary for thy own support. What God has given us more than we need is entrusted to us for the benefit of those that are in poverty and affliction. He who can, and does not, help the poor, is a disgrace to Christianity; and he who does not lend his hand for the support of the cause of God is a worthless member of the Church of Christ. He who shows no mercy shall have judgment without mercy. And he who spends in pampering the flesh what should be given to the poor shall have a fearful account to give in the day of the Lord.

## CHAPTER 12.

*Herod persecutes the Christians, 1. Kills James, 2. And casts Peter into prison, 3, 4. The Church makes incessant prayer for his deliverance, 5. An angel of God opens the prison doors and leads him out, 6-10. Peter rejoices, and comes to the house of Mary, where many were praying, and declares how he was delivered, 11-17. The soldiers who kept the prison are examined by Herod, and he commands them to be put to death, 18, 19. Herod is enraged against the people of Tyre, but is appeased by their submission, 20. He makes an oration to the people, receives idolatrous praises, and an angel of the Lord unites him, and he dies a miserable death, 21-23. The word of God increases, 24. Barnabas and Saul, having fulfilled their ministry, return from Jerusalem accompanied by John Mark, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12.

**Verse 1. *Herod the king***— This was Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, and grandson of Herod the Great; he was nephew to Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist, and brother to Herodias. He was made king by the Emperor Caligula, and was put in possession of all the territories formerly held by his uncle Philip and by Lysanias; viz. Iturea, Trachonitis, Abilene, with Gaulonitis, Batanaea, and Penias. To these the Emperor Claudius afterwards added Judea and Samaria; which were nearly all the dominions possessed by his grandfather, Herod the Great. See Luke 3:1; see also an account of the Herod family, in the note on Matthew 2:1.

***To vex certain of the Church.***— That is, to destroy its chief ornaments and supports.

**Verse 2. *He killed James the brother of John with the sword.***— This was James the greater, son of Zebedee, and must be distinguished from James the less, son of Alphaeus. This latter was put to death by Ananias the high priest, during the reign of Nero. This James with his brother John were those who requested to sit on the right and left hand of our Lord, see

Matthew 20:23; and our Lord's prediction was now fulfilled in one of them, who by his martyrdom drank of our Lord's cup, and was baptized with his baptism. By the death of James, the number of the apostles was reduced to eleven; and we do not find that ever it was filled up. The apostles never had any successors: God has continued their doctrine, but not their order.

By killing with the sword we are to understand beheading. Among the Jews there were four kinds of deaths: 1. Stoning; 2. burning; killing with the sword, or beheading; and, 4. strangling. The third was a Roman as well as a Jewish mode of punishment. Killing with the sword was the punishment which, according to the Talmud, was inflicted on those who drew away the people to any strange worship, Sanhedr. fol. iii. James was probably accused of this, and hence the punishment mentioned in the text.

**Verse 3. *He proceeded-to take Peter also.***— He supposed that these two were pillars on which the infant cause rested; and that, if these were removed, the building must necessarily come down.

***The days of unleavened bread.***— About the latter end of March or beginning of April; but whether in the third or fourth year of the Emperor Claudius, or earlier or later, cannot be determined.

**Verse 4. *Four quaternions of soldiers***— That is, sixteen, or four companies of four men each, who had the care of the prison, each company taking in turn one of the four watches of the night.

***Intending after Easter to bring him forth***— *μετα το πασχα*, After the passover. Perhaps there never was a more unhappy, not to say absurd, translation than that in our text. But, before I come to explain the word, it is necessary to observe that our term called Easter is not exactly the same with the Jewish passover. This festival is always held on the fourteenth day of the first vernal full moon; but the Easter of the Christians, never till the next Sabbath after said full moon; and, to avoid all conformity with the Jews in this matter, if the fourteenth day of the first vernal full moon happen on a Sabbath, then the festival of Easter is deferred till the Sabbath following. The first vernal moon is that whose fourteenth day is either on the day of the vernal equinox, or the next fourteenth day after it. The

vernal equinox, according to a decree of the council of Nice, is fixed to the 21st day of March; and therefore the first vernal moon is that whose fourteenth day falls upon the 21st of March, or the first fourteenth day after. Hence it appears that the next Sabbath after the fourteenth day of the vernal moon, which is called the Paschal term, is always Easter day. And, therefore, the earliest Paschal term being the 21st of March, the 22d of March is the earliest Easter possible; and the 18th of April being the latest Paschal term, the seventh day after, that is the 25th of April, is the latest Easter possible.

The term Easter, inserted here by our translators, they borrowed from the ancient Anglo-Saxon service-books, or from the version of the Gospels, which always translates the *το πασχα* of the Greek by this term; e.g. Matthew 26:2: Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover. (Anglo-Saxon) Wite ye that aefter twam dagum beoth Eastro. Matthew 16:19: And they made ready the passover. (Anglo-Saxon) And hig gegearwodon hym Easter thenunga (i.e. the paschal supper.) Prefixed to Matthew 28:1, are these words: (Anglo-Saxon) This part to be read on Easter even. And, before Matthew 28:8, these words: (Anglo-Saxon) Mark 14:12: And the first day of unleavened bread when they killed the passover. (Anglo-Saxon) And tham forman daegeazimorum, tha hi Eastron offrodon. Other examples occur in this version. Wiclif used the word *paske*, i.e. passover; but Tindal, Coverdale, Becke, and Cardmarden, following the old Saxon mode of translation, insert Easter: the Geneva Bible very properly renders it the passover. The Saxon (Anglo-Saxon) are different modes of spelling the name of the goddess Easter, whose festival was celebrated by our pagan forefathers on the month of April; hence that month, in the Saxon calendar, is called (Anglo-Saxon) Easter month. Every view we can take of this subject shows the gross impropriety of retaining a name every way exceptionable, and palpably absurd.

**Verse 5. *Prayer was made without ceasing***— The Greek word *εκτενης* signifies both fervor and earnestness, as well as perseverance. These prayers of the Church produced that miraculous interference mentioned below, and without which Peter could not have thus escaped from the hands of this ruthless king.

**Verse 6. *Sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains***— Two soldiers guarded his person; his right hand being bound to the left hand of one, and his left hand bound to the right hand of the other. This was the Roman method of guarding their prisoners, and appears to be what is intimated in the text.

**Verse 7. *Smote Peter on the side***— He struck him in such a way as was just sufficient to awake him from his sleep.

***His chains fell off from his hands.***— The chains mentioned above, by which he was bound to the two soldiers.

**Verse 8. *Gird thyself***— It seems Peter had put off the principal part of his clothes, that he might sleep with more comfort. His resuming all that he had thrown off was a proof that every thing had been done leisurely. There was no evidence of any hurry; nor of any design to elude justice, or even to avoid meeting his accusers in any legal way. It appears that the two soldiers were overwhelmed by a deep sleep, which fell upon them from God.

**Verse 9. *He-wist not***— He knew not; from the Anglo-Saxon, (Anglo-Saxon), to know. He supposed himself to be in a dream.

**Verse 10. *The first and-second ward***— It is supposed that ancient Jerusalem was surrounded by three walls: if so, then passing through the gates of these three walls successively is possibly what is meant by the expression in the text. The prison in which he was confined might have been that which was at the outer wall.

***Iron gate***— This was in the innermost wall of the three, and was strongly plated over with iron, for the greater security. In the east, the gates are often thus secured to the present day. Pitts says so of the gates of Algiers; and Pocock, of some near Antioch. Perhaps this is all that is meant by the iron gate. One of the quaternions of soldiers was placed at each gate.

***Which opened-of his own accord***— Influenced by the unseen power of the angel.

***The angel departed from him.***— Having brought him into a place in which he no longer needed his assistance. What is proper to God he always does: what is proper to man he requires him to perform.

**Verse 11. *When Peter was come to himself***— Every thing he saw astonished him; he could scarcely credit his eyes; he was in a sort of ecstasy; and it was only when the angel left him that he was fully convinced that all was real.

***Now I know-that the Lord hath sent his angel***— The poor German divine is worthy of pity, who endeavored to persuade himself and his countrymen that all this talk about the angel was mere illusion; that Peter was delivered in a way which he could not comprehend, and therefore was led to attribute to a particular providence of God what probably was done by the prefect of the prison, who favored him! But it is the study of this writer to banish from the word of God all supernatural influence; and to reduce even the miracles of Christ to simple operations of nature, or to the workings of imagination and the prejudices of a weak and credulous people. Such men should at once cast off the mask which so thinly covers their infidelity, and honestly avow themselves to be, what they are, the enemies of revelation in general, and of the Christian religion in particular. Peter could say, Now I know of a certainty that the Lord hath sent his angel, and delivered me, etc. No such thing, says Mr. E., Peter was deceived; it was not the Lord, it was the prefect or some other person. Now we know that Peter spoke by the Holy Ghost; but we have no much testimony of Mr. E. nor of any of his associates.

***And all the expectation of the-Jews.***— It seems they had built much on the prospect of having him sacrificed, as they already had James.

**Verse 12. *And when he had considered***— When he had weighed every thing, and was fully satisfied of the Divine interposition, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, the author of the Gospel, where it appears many were gathered together making prayer and supplication, and probably for Peter's release.

**Verse 13. *As Peter knocked***— The door was probably shut for fear of the Jews; and, as most of the houses in the east have an area before the door, it might have been at this outer gate that Peter stood knocking.

***A damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.***— She came to inquire who was there. Rhoda signifies a rose; and it appears to have been customary with the Jews, as Grotius and others remark, to give the names of flowers and

trees to their daughters: thus Susannah signifies a lily, Hadassah, a myrtle, Tamar, a palm tree, etc., etc.

**Verse 15. *It is his angel.***— It was a common opinion among the Jews that every man has a guardian angel, and in the popish Church it is an article of faith. The Jews also believed that angels often assumed the likeness of particular persons. They have many stories of the appearance of Elijah in the likeness of different rabbins. As *αγγελος* signifies in general a messenger, whether Divine or human, some have thought that the angel or messenger here means a servant or person which the disciples supposed was sent from Peter to announce something of importance to the brethren: it was also an opinion among the Jews, even in the time of the apostles, as appears from Philo, that the departed souls of good men officiated as ministering angels; and it is possible that the disciples at Mary's house might suppose that Peter had been murdered in the prison; and that his spirit was now come to announce this event, or give some particular warning to the Church.

**Verse 17. *Declared-how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.***— He still persisted in the belief that his deliverance was purely supernatural. It seems that some modern critics could have informed him of his mistake. See Acts 12:11.

***Show these things unto James, and to the brethren***— That is, in one word, show them to the Church, at the head of which James undoubtedly was; as we may clearly understand by the part he took in the famous council held at Jerusalem, relative to certain differences between the believing Jews and Gentiles. See Acts 15:13-21. There is still no supremacy for Peter. He who was bishop or overseer of the Church at Jerusalem was certainly at the head of the whole Church of God at this time; but James was then bishop or inspector of the Church at Jerusalem, and, consequently, was the only visible head then upon earth.

***He departed-into another place.***— Some popish writers say that he went to Rome, and founded a Christian Church there. Those who can believe any thing may believe this. Where he went we know not; but it is probable that he withdrew for the present into a place of privacy, till the heat of the inquiry was over relative to his escape from the prison; for he saw that Herod was intent on his death.



**Verse 19. *Commanded that they should be put to death.***— He believed, or pretended to believe, that the escape of Peter was owing to the negligence of the keepers: jailers, watchmen, etc., ordinarily suffered the same kind of punishment which should have been inflicted on the prisoner whose escape they were supposed to have favored.

***He went down from Judea to Caesarea***— How soon he went down, and how long he stayed there, we know not.

**Verse 20. *Highly displeased with them of Tyre***— On what account Herod was thus displeased is not related by any historian, as far as I have been able to ascertain. Josephus, who speaks of this journey of Herod to Caesarea, says nothing of it; and it is useless for us to conjecture.

***Having made Blastus-their friend***— Blastus was probably a eunuch, and had considerable influence over his master Herod; and, to reach the master, it is likely they bribed the chamberlain.

***Desired peace***— The Tyrians and Sidonians being equally subjects of the Roman government with the inhabitants of Galilee, Herod could not go to war with them; but, being irritated against them, he might prevent their supplies: they therefore endeavored to be on peaceable, i.e. friendly, terms with him.

***Their country was nourished by the king's country.***— That is, they had all their supplies from Galilee; for Tyre and Sidon, being places of trade and commerce, with little territory, were obliged to have all their provisions from the countries under Herod's jurisdiction. This had been the case even from the days of Solomon, as we learn from 1 Kings 5:11; where it is said that Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat, for food to his household; and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. See also Ezekiel 27:17.

**Verse 21. *Upon a set day***, etc.— A day on which games, etc., were exhibited in honor of the Roman emperor. What this refers to, we learn from Josephus. "Herod, having reigned three years over ALL Judea, (he had reigned over the tetrarchy of his brother Philip four years before this,) went down to Caesarea, and there exhibited shows and games in honor of Claudius, and made vows for his health. On the second day of these shows, he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture

most truly wonderful, and came into the theater early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment, being illuminated by the first reflection of the sun's rays, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those who looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another, 'He is a god:' and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Nor did the king rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But, looking up, he saw an owl on a certain rope over his head, and immediately conceived that this bird was to him a messenger of ill tidings; and he fell into the deepest sorrow; a severe pain also arose in his bowels, and he died after five days' severe illness." This is the sum of the account given by Josephus, Ant. lib. xix. cap. 8, sect. 2. (See Whiston's edition.) Notwithstanding the embellishments of the Jewish historian, it agrees in the main surprisingly with the account given here by St. Luke. Josephus, it is true, suppresses some circumstances which would have been dishonorable to this impious king; and, according to his manner, puts a speech in Herod's mouth, when he found himself struck with death, expressive of much humility and contrition. But this speech is of no authority. When Josephus takes up and pursues the thread of mere historical narration, he may be safely trusted; but whenever he begins to embellish, or put speeches in the mouths of his actors, he is no longer to be credited. He even here transforms an angel of the Lord into an owl, and introduces it most improbably into his narration; as if an owl, a bird of all others that can least bear the light, should come and perch on the pavilion of the king, when the sun was shining with the most resplendent rays!

**Verse 23. *The angel of the Lord smote him***— His death was most evidently a judgment from God.

***Because he gave not God the glory***— He did not rebuke his flatterers, but permitted them to give him that honor that was due to God alone. See on Acts 12:21.

***And was eaten of worms***— Whether this was the morbus pedicularis, or whether a violent inflammation of his bowels, terminating in putrefaction, did not actually produce worms, which, for several days, swarmed in his

infected entrails, we cannot tell. It is most likely that this latter was the case; and this is at once more agreeable to the letter of the text, and to the circumstances of the case as related by Josephus.

***And gave up the ghost.***— That is, he died of the disorder by which he was then seized, after having lingered, in excruciating torments, for five days, as Josephus has stated. Antiochus Epiphanes and Herod the Great died of the same kind of disease. See the observations at the end of Acts 1:26 relative to the death of Judas.

**Verse 24. *But the word of God***— The Christian doctrine preached by the apostles grew and multiplied—became more evident, and had daily accessions; for the spirit of revelation rested on those men, and God was daily adding to that word as circumstances required, in order to complete that testimony of his which we now find contained in the New Testament. As there is in the original an allusion to the vegetation of grain, (*ηρξανε*, it grew, as corn grows, the stalk and the ear; *και επληθυνετο*, it was multiplied, as the corn is in the full ear,) there is probably a reference to the parable of the SOWER and his seed; for the seed is the word of God, and the doctrine of the kingdom. It was liberally sown; it grew vigorously, and became greatly multiplied. And why? Because it was the word, the doctrine of God—there was no corruption in it; and because God watered it with the dew of heaven from on high.

**Verse 25. *Returned from Jerusalem***— That is, to Antioch, after the death of Herod.

***When they had fulfilled their ministry***— When they had carried the alms of the Christians at Antioch to the poor saints at Jerusalem, according to what is mentioned, Acts 11:29, 30, to support them in the time of the coming famine.

***And took with them John, whose surname was Mark.***— This was the son of Mary, mentioned Acts 12:12. He accompanied the apostles to Cyprus, and afterwards in several of their voyages, till they came to Perga in Pamphylia. Finding them about to take a more extensive voyage, he departed from them. See the case, Acts 13:13; 15:37-40.

1. WHEN the nature, spirit, and tendency of Christianity are considered, we may well be astonished that it should ever find a persecutor among the

souls it was designed to instruct and save! Devils can have no part in it, and therefore we may naturally expect them, through envy and malice, to oppose it; but that men, for whose use and salvation the wisdom and mercy of God made it, should reject its offers of mercy, and persecute to death those who proclaimed it, is the most unaccountable thing that can be conceived. What a proof is this of mere maliciousness, where the persecutor not only serves no self-interest by it, but destroys, as far as he can, all that could promote his own present and eternal happiness! This argues such blindness of understanding, hardness of heart, and derangement of mind, as can be accounted for only on the supposition of a nature totally fallen from God, righteousness, and truth. The Jews crucify Christ, and martyr Stephen; and Herod murders James; and both join together to persecute the followers of Christ and destroy his cause. Reader, consider the consequences: this bad people were permitted to remain till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and were then cut of by a most terrible judgment; and Herod was visited for his transgressions in such a most awful way as strongly marked the displeasure of God against persecutors. If a man contend with a man, the contest is in a certain way equal-the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth; but when a man enters the lists against his Maker, as every persecutor does, wo unto that man!-he must be torn in pieces, when there is none to deliver.

2. How true is the saying, there is neither counsel nor might against the Lord! In the midst of all troubles and afflictions, that kingdom of heaven which is like a grain of mustard seed grew and increased, and became a mighty tree which is now filling the whole earth, and fowl of every wing are flying to lodge in its branches. Ride on, and be thou prosperous, O Christ! We wish thee good luck with thine honor.

## CHAPTER 13.

*Of the prophets and teachers in the Church of Antioch, 1. By command of the Holy Spirit the Church appoints Saul and Barnabas to a particular work, 2, 3. They depart, and travel to Seleucia, Cyprus, and Salamis, preaching in the Jewish synagogues, 4, 5. At Paphos they meet with Bar-Jesus or Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer, who endeavored to prevent the deputy of the island from receiving the Christian faith, 6-8. Saul, for the first time called Paul, denounces the judgments of God upon him, and he is struck blind, 9-11. The deputy, seeing this, is confirmed in the faith, 12. Paul and his company leave Paphos, and come to Pamphylia, where John Mark leaves them, and returns to Jerusalem, 13. Paul and Barnabas proceed to Antioch; and, coming into a synagogue of the Jews, are requested by the rulers of it to preach to the people, 14, 15. Paul preaches, and proves that Jesus is the Christ, 16-41. The Gentiles desire the sermon to be preached to them the next Sabbath, and many of the Jews and proselytes receive the Christian faith, 42, 43. The next Sabbath the whole city attend; and the Jews, filled with envy, contradict and blaspheme, 44, 45. Paul and Barnabas with great boldness show that, by the order of God, the Gospel was to be preached first to them; but, seeing they had rejected it, it should now be taken from them, and sent to the Gentiles, 46, 47. The Gentiles rejoice and receive the truth, 48, 49. The Jews raise a persecution against the apostles, and expel them, 50. They come to Iconium, full of joy and the Holy Ghost, 51, 52.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13.

**Verse 1.** *Certain prophets and teachers*— *προφηται και διδασκαλοι*. It is probable that these were not distinct offices; both might be vested in the same persons. By prophets we are to understand, when the word is taken simply, persons who were frequently inspired to predict future events, and by teachers, persons whose ordinary office was to instruct the people in the Christian doctrine. These also, to be properly qualified for the office, must have been endued with the influence of the Holy Spirit; for, as but a very small portion of the Scriptures of the New Testament

could have as yet been given, it was necessary that the teachers should derive much of their own teaching by immediate revelation from God. On prophets and teachers, see the note on Acts 11:27.

**Barnabas**— Of whom see before, Acts 11:22-24.

**Simeon-Niger**— Or Simeon the Black, either because of his complexion, or his hair. It was on reasons of this kind that surnames, surnoms, name upon name were first imposed. Of this Simeon nothing farther is known.

**Lucius of Cyrene**— See Acts 11:20.

**Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod**— Our margin has given the proper meaning of the original word **συντροφος**, a foster-brother; i.e. Manaen was the son of the woman who nursed Herod Antipas; and the son, also, whose milk the young Herod shared. Of a person whose name was Manaen or Menahem, and who was in the court of Herod, we read several things in the Jewish writers. They say that this man had the gift of prophecy, and that he told Herod, when he was but a child, that he would be king. When Herod became king he sent for him to his court, and held him in great estimation. It might have been the son of this Menahem of whom St. Luke here speaks. Dr. Lightfoot has shown this to be at least possible.

**Verse 2. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted**— On Mondays and Thursdays it was usual with the more pious Jews to attend the public service in their synagogues, and to fast: the former is what we are to understand by ministering to the Lord. On the Sabbaths they attended the service in the synagogue, but did not fast. The Greek word, **λειτουργουντων**, signifies performing the office of praying, supplicating, rendering thanks, etc.: hence the word **λειτουργια**, liturgy, the work of prayer, etc., from **λιτη**, supplication, according to some; or rather from **λειτος**, common, and **εργον**, work, the common or public work, in which all the people were engaged.

**The Holy Ghost said**— A revelation of the Divine will was made to some person then present; probably to either Simeon, or Lucius, or Manaen, mentioned before.

*Separate me Barnabas and Saul.*— Consecrate, or set them apart, for the particular work whereunto I have called them. How this was done, we find in the next verse.

**Verse 3.** *And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them*— 1. They fasted: this was probably done by the whole Church. 2. They prayed, that God would bless and prosper them in their work. 3. They laid hands upon them; thus solemnly appointing them to that particular work. But was it by this fasting, praying, and imposition of hands that these men were qualified for this work? No. God had already called them to it, Acts 13:2, and he who called them had qualified them. Both their call and their qualification came from God; but he chose that they should have also the sanction of that Church of which they had been members; and therefore he said, Separate me, etc. The ordination of elders among the Jews was by three persons; and here we find three, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen, ordaining two others, Barnabas and Saul. But how did the Jews ordain? Not by imposition of hands: this is strictly forbidden, see Maimon. Sanh. chap. 4. “After what manner is the ordaining of elders for ever? Not that they should lay their hands on the head of an elder; but only that they should call him Rabbi, and say to him, Behold, thou art ordained, and hast power of judging, etc.” It is remarkable that the imposition of hands in the ordaining of elders was not used among the ancient Jews, probably never under the first temple; and rarely, if ever, under the second. See Lightfoot on this place. The Church at Antioch, however, did depart from this custom: they put their hands on the heads of Barnabas and Saul; thus designating them to be the persons whom they, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, sent to preach the Gospel of Christ to the heathen.

When the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them, and the elders of the Church, in consequence, prayed, fasted, and laid their hands upon them, they certainly understood that by acting thus they fulfilled the mind of the Spirit. Hence, is it not evident that, when the elders of the Church of God have good reason to believe that He has called certain persons to the work of the ministry, and qualified them for that work, they should proceed as the elders of the Church of Antioch did; and by fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands, separate those persons for the work whereunto God

has called them. Such persons will consider themselves accountable to GOD and his Church, and should take care how they use the gift and authority received from both. Is it not being wise above what is written to say, “When God has called and given authority, there is no need of ordination or appointment from man?” I would just ask the objector, Why, then, when God had called Barnabas and Saul to the work, did he command the Church to separate them to him for that very work? And why did they, in obedience, fast, pray, and lay hands upon them? I shall dispute with no man about the superior excellence of the episcopal or presbyterian form in ordination: if all the preliminaries be right, they may be both equally good, for all that I have ever been able to learn to the contrary; but that there should be some proper scriptural form attended to, I am fully satisfied. Besides, if the plan of the Church at Antioch were regularly and faithfully followed, in sending forth the ministers of the Gospel, no man can prove that God would not own them in an especial manner, and more particularly prosper their work. But, O ye rulers of the Church! be careful, as ye shall answer it to God, never to lay hands on the head of a man whom ye have not just reason to believe God has called to the work; and whose eye is single, and whose heart is pure. Let none be sent to teach Christianity, who have not experienced it to be the power of God to the salvation of their own souls. If ye do, though they have your authority, they never can have the blessing nor the approbation of God. “I sent them not: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 23:32.

**Verse 4. *Being sent forth by the Holy Ghost***— By his influence, authority, and under his continual direction. Without the first, they were not qualified to go; without the second, they had no authority to go; and without the third, they could not know where to go.

***Departed, unto Seleucia***— This is generally understood to be Seleucia of Pieria, the first city on the coast of Syria, coming from Cilicia; near the place where the river Orontes pours itself into the sea.

***They sailed to Cyprus***.— A well known island in the Mediterranean Sea. See on Acts 4:36.

**Verse 5. *Salamis***— The capital of the island of Cyprus; afterwards called Constantia, and now Salina, situated on the eastern part of the island.



**They preached the word of God**— **τον λογον**, The doctrine of God, the Christian religion, emphatically so called.

**They had also John to their minister.**— This was John Mark, of whom we heard, Acts 12:25; for their minister, **υπηρετην**, to assist them in minor offices, as deacon or servant, that they might give themselves wholly to the doctrine of the Lord.

**Verse 6. Gone through the isle**— **’ολην**, The WHOLE isle, is added here by ABCDE, several others, both the Syrian, Coptic, AETHIOPIC, ARMENIAN, VULGATE, and ITALIA; and also by several of the Greek fathers; and this must be the true reading, for it is evident they ran through the whole island from east to west.

**Unto Paphos**— This town, next in importance to Salamis, was situated on the western part of the isle; and having gone from Salamis to this place is a proof that they had gone through the whole island from east to west, according to the reading noticed above. There was probably no town in the universe more dissolute than Paphos. Here Venus had a superb temple: here she was worshipped with all her rites; and from this place she was named the Paphian Venus, the queen of Paphos, etc. This temple and whole city were destroyed by an earthquake; so that a vestige of either does not now remain. There are two islands which go by this name, both adjoining, and on the west side of the island of Cyprus. One is called Old Paphos, the other New Paphos; the latter is probably the island here mentioned, though they are often confounded. On this island there is a Christian Church, dedicated to St. George, in which service is performed by the Greek ministers. It is a bishop’s see, suffragan to the Abp. of Nicosia.

**A certain sorcerer**— **τινα μαγον**, A magician, one who used magical arts, and pretended to have commerce with supernatural agents. A person who dealt in sleight of hand, or leger-de-main. Such as I have supposed Simon Magus to be. See the note on Acts 8:9.

**A false prophet**— A deceiver, one who pretended to have a Divine commission, a fortune teller.

**Bar-Jesus**— That is, the son of Jesus or Joshua; as Bar-jona is the son of Jonah; Bar-tholomew, the son of Thalmi, etc.

**Verse 7. *The deputy of the country***— *ανθυπατω*, The proconsul. Rosenmuller and others remark, that in those days the Romans sent two different kinds of governors into the provinces. Some of the provinces were Caesarean or imperial, and into those they sent propretors; others belonged to the senate and people of Rome, and into those they sent proconsuls. Cyprus had formerly been an imperial province; but Augustus, who made the distinction, had given it to the people, whence it was governed by a proconsul. See Dion Cass. Hist. Rom. lib. iv. p. 523. (Edit. Leunclav.)

***Sergius Paulus***— This proconsul is not mentioned any where else: he became a Christian, had his name written in the book of life, and, probably on that very account, blotted out of the *Fasti Consulares*.

***A prudent man***— *ανδρι συνετω*, A man of good sense, of a sound understanding, and therefore wished to hear the doctrine taught by these apostles; he did not persecute the men for their preaching, but sent for them that he might hear for himself.

**Verse 8. *But Elymas, the sorcerer, (for so is his name by interpretation)***— That is, Elymas is the interpretation of the word *μαγος*, or sorcerer; not of the word Bar-Jesus as some have imagined; and to support which they have been led into strange etymologies on the word *βαρ-ιησους*, Bar-Jesus. But how is Elymas, *ελυμας*, the interpretation of the word *μαγος*, magician or sorcerer? Ans. Both names are Asiatic; but neither Hebrew nor Greek. I have already observed, in the note on Matthew 2:1, that (Persic) mogh in Persian means an idolater, a worshipper of fire, and sometimes what we term a magician. Elymas is from the Arabic (Arabic) ilm, knowledge, science, doctrine, art; from alama, he was wise, skilled, etc.; hence (Persic) aleem or alymon, a doctor or learned man, and, with the Greek termination, *ελυμας*, Elymas, the interpretation of (Persic) mogh, Greek *μαγος*, magos, a magician, a wise man, doctor, etc.

**Verse 9. *Saul, who also is-Paul***— This is the first time the name Paul occurs, and the last time in which this apostle is called Saul, as his common or general name.

Saul, *שאול* Shaul, was the name of the first Israelitish king, and signifies asked, sought; from *שאל* shaal, he asked, inquired, etc.

Paul, Paulus, if derived from the Latin, signifies little, dwarfish: but if from the Hebrew, פלא pala, it signifies extraordinary, wonderful; and this appears to have been the derivation assigned to it by St. Jerome, com. in Ep. Pauli ad Philem., who translates it mirabilis, wonderful, and Hesychius must have had the same in view, for he defines it thus, παυλος, θαυμαστος, η εκλεκτος, συμβουλος, Paul, wonderful, or elect, counsellor. The lexicographer had probably here in view, Isaiah 9:6: his name shall be called (פלא יועץ pelç yoàts) wonderful, counsellor; which he might corrupt into paulus, and thus make his θαυμαστος συμβουλος out of it by way of explanation. Triller, however, supposes the συμβουλος of Hesychius to be corrupted from συνδουλος fellow servant, which is a term not unfrequently applied to apostles, etc., in the New Testament, who are called the servants of God; and it is used by Paul himself, Colossians 1:7; 4:7. The Latin original is the most probable. It is well known that the Jews in the apostolic age had frequently two names, one Hebrew, the other Greek or Roman. Saul was born of Jewish parents, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; he had therefore his first name from that language, שאול Shaul, asked or begged; as it is possible he might have been a child for whom his parents had addressed their fervent petitions to God. The case of Samuel is one in point. See 1 Samuel 1:9-18. As he was born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, he was consequently born a free Roman citizen; and hence his parents would naturally give him, for cognomen, some name borrowed from the Latin tongue, and Paulus, which signifies little, might indicate that he was at his birth a small or diminutive child. And it is very likely that he was low in stature all his days; and that it is to this he refers himself, 2 Corinthians 10:10, for his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. If he were small in stature, his voice would be naturally low and feeble; and the Greeks, who were fond of a thundering eloquence, would despise him on this very account.

***Filled with the Holy Ghost***— Therefore the sentence he pronounced was not from himself, but from God. And indeed, had he not been under a Divine influence, it is not likely he would have ventured thus to accost this sorcerer in the presence of the governor, who, no doubt, had greatly admired him.

**Verse 10. *O full of all subtilty***— **δολου**, Deceit, pretending to supernatural powers without possessing any, and having only cunning and deceit as their substitutes.

***And-mischief***— **ραδιουργιας**, from **ραδιος**, easy, and **εργον**, a work; one who is ready at his work; a word which excellently well defines a juggler, one who is expert at sleight of hand; though it is often employed to signify an abandoned and accomplished villain.

***Child of the devil***— **υιε διαβολου**, Son of the devil, possessing his nature; filled with his cunning; and, in consequence, practising deceit.

***Enemy of all righteousness***— **εχθρεπασης δικαιοσυνης**; Opposed in thy heart to all that is just, true, and good.

***Wilt thou not cease to pervert***, etc.— **ου παυση διαστρεφων**. Wilt thou not cease perverting? He had probably labored in this bad work from the beginning of Paul's ministry in the place; and God in his mercy had borne with him; and no doubt the apostle had warned him, for thus much seems implied in the reproof. What a terrible character is given of this bad man! He no doubt passed among the people for what we call a clever fellow; and he was so clever as to hide himself under a pretty dense mask; but God, who searches the heart, plucked it off, and tells him, and those who were perverted by him, what an accomplished deceiver and knave he was.

***The right ways of the Lord***— **τας οδους κυριου τας ευθειας**, The ways of the Lord, the straight ways. This saying is very emphatical. The ways of Elymas were crooked and perverse; the ways of the Lord, the doctrine taught by him, plain and straight. What is here said of the conduct and teaching of Elymas, for he was a false prophet, is true of all false doctrine: it is complex, devious, and tortuous: while the doctrine of God is simple, plain, and straight; directing in the way, the sure way, that leads to present peace and everlasting happiness. From the phraseology which the apostle employs in this terrible address to Elymas, we may learn, as well as from his name Bar-Jesus, that he was by birth and education a Jew. On this account he was the greater enemy to Christianity; and on this same account he was the less excusable.

**Verse 11. *The hand of the Lord is upon thee***— The power of God is now about to deal with thee in the way of justice.

***Thou shalt be blind***— Every word here proves the immediate inspiration of Paul. He was full of the Holy Ghost when he began this address: by the light of that Spirit he discerned the state of Elymas, and exposed his real character; and, by the prophetic influence of that same Spirit, he predicted the calamity that was about to fall upon him, while as yet there was no sign of his blindness! Mark this!

***Not seeing the sun for a season.***— In the midst of judgment God remembers mercy. This blindness was not to be perpetual: it was intended to be the means of awakening and softening the hard heart of this poor sinner. There is an ancient tradition, and it is mentioned both by Origen and Chrysostom, that Elymas, in consequence of this became a sincere convert to the religion of Christ. Origen says: “And Paul by a word striking him blind, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paul, **δια των πονων επιστρεφει αυτον εις θεοσεβειαν**, by anguish converted him to godliness.” And, commenting on—Thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun, **αχρι καιρου**, for a season, asks, “And why for a season? That, being smitten on account of his transgressions, and brought to repentance, he might at last be deemed worthy to see the sun, not only with his body, but with his mind; that the Divine virtue might be proclaimed in restoring him to sight, and his soul, believing, might receive godliness.” Com. in Exod., vol. i. p. 117, edit. de la Rue, Par. 1733.

***There fell on him a mist and darkness***— **αχλυσ**, achlus, is a disordered state of the eye, in which the patient sees through a thick mist. This thick mist, or perturbed state of the eye, took place first: it increased, and **σκοτος**, thick, positive darkness, was the issue.

***He went about***— **πεπιαγων**. Not knowing how to take a right step, he groped about in great uncertainty; and, not being able to find his way, he sought for some persons to lead him by the hand. This state of Elymas is inimitably expressed in one of the cartoons of Raphael, now at Hampton-court, (and lately engraved, in the true spirit of the original, by Mr. Thomas Holloway,) in which his whole figure expresses the depth of distress, concern, uncertainty, and confusion; and, to use a word common in exhibiting this matchless piece of painting, he is blind from head to foot. In this manner the text authorizes the painter to express the state of this miserable culprit.

**Verse 12. *The deputy-believed***— This was a proof that the doctrine was true; and that the power of God, from which nothing could be concealed, and which nothing could resist, was with these preachers.

***Being astonished***— *εκπλησσομενος*, Being struck with astonishment, as Elymas was struck with blindness. Thus the word of God is a two-edged sword: it smites the sinner with judgment or compunction; and the sincere inquirer after truth, with conviction of its own worth and excellence.

**Verse 13. *Paul and his company loosed from Paphos***— They sailed away from this island, leaving, it may be presumed, Elymas a sincere and deeply humbled penitent; and Sergius Paul, a thorough and happy believer in the doctrine of Christ.

Previously to this time, St. Luke always mentions Barnabas before Paul; but after this he mentions Paul always first; probably after seeing how God had distinguished him in the late proceedings at Cyprus; as much of the Holy Spirit now rested upon him.

***They came to Perga in Pamphylia***— As Perga was not a maritime town, it is conjectured that the apostles sailed up the river Cestrus, in order to come to this place, which, according to Strabo, was situated about sixty leagues up this river, and near to which was a famous temple dedicated to Diana. For Pamphylia, see Acts 2:10.

***And John departing from them***— Why John Mark left his brethren at this place we are not informed; probably he went to visit his pious mother Mary at Jerusalem, and to see Peter, to whom he is supposed to have been much attached. It certainly was not with the approbation of Paul that he left them at this place, as we learn from Acts 15:38; yet his departure does not seem to have merited the displeasure of Barnabas; for John Mark having met these apostles at Antioch, when Paul purposed to revisit the various places where they had planted the word of God, Barnabas was willing to take him with them; but Paul would not consent, because he had departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work, Acts 15:35-39, and this occasioned a separation between Barnabas and Paul. It does not appear that John Mark was under any obligation to accompany them any longer or any farther than he pleased. He seems to have been little else than their servant, and certainly was not divinely

appointed to this work, as they were; and consequently might leave them innocently, though not kindly, if they could not readily supply his place. In this respect John Mark might be to blame; but Barnabas, whose nephew he was, could look over this fault more easily than Paul, who could not find those motives to pass by what was reprehensible in his conduct which natural affection might furnish to his brother apostle.

**Verse 14. *They came to Antioch in Pisidia***— This place is mentioned thus to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria, with which it had nothing in common but the name. There were several cities and towns in various districts of these countries called Antioch: some have reckoned up not less than twelve. Pisidia, in which this was situated, was a province of Asia Minor, near to Pamphylia, having Phrygia on the north, and Pamphylia on the south. The position of all these places may be seen on the map.

***Into the synagogue on the Sabbath day***— Though Paul was now on a special mission to the Gentiles, yet he availed himself of every opportunity, in every place, of making the first offer of salvation to the Jews.

**Verse 15. *After the reading of the law and the prophets***— A certain portion of the law and another of the prophets, was read every Sabbath; and the law was so divided as to be read over once every year. In the notes at the conclusion of Deuteronomy, I have considered this subject at large, and given a complete table of the Parashoth, sections of the law, and Haptharoth, sections of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath in the year in the Jewish synagogues. To have an exact view of every part of the Jewish ecclesiastical economy, the reader will do well to consult the above mentioned table, and those which follow it: they have been drawn up with great care, attention, and indescribable labor.

It has been a question, in what language were the law and prophets read in a synagogue of Pisidia, for in that district Strabo informs us that four languages were spoken, viz. the Pisidian, the Solyman, the Greek, and the Lydian. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, with great probability, that the Scriptures were read in the original Hebrew; and that an interpreter tendered the reading to the people in their mother tongue. There is no doubt that the Jews and proselytes understood the Greek tongue well; and they certainly had the Septuagint version among them.

***The rulers of the synagogue***— These were the persons whose business it was to read the appointed sections, and to take care of the synagogue and its concerns; and to see that all was done decently and in order.

***Sent unto them***— Seeing them to be Jews, they wished them to give some suitable address to the people, i.e. to the Jews who were then engaged in Divine worship; for the whole of the following discourse, which greatly resembles that of St. Stephen, Acts 7:1-53, is directed to the Jews alone; and this was probably spoken either in Hebrew or Greek.

***Ye men and brethren***— *ανδρες αδελφοι*, Men brethren, a Hebraism for, “Ye men who are our brethren,” i.e. Jews, as we ourselves are; but *ανδρες* is often an expletive, as we have already seen. See the note on Acts 7:2.

***If ye have any word of exhortation***— *ει εστι λογος εν υμιν παρακλησεως*; If ye have any subject of consolation, any word of comfort to us, who are sojourners in this strange land, speak it. The Consolation of Israel was an epithet of the Messiah among the Jews; and it is probable that it was in reference to him that the rulers of the synagogue spoke. That *παρακλησις* is to be understood here as meaning consolation, and this in reference to the Messiah, the whole of the following discourse will prove to the attentive reader; in which Paul shows the care and protection of God towards his people Israel, and the abundant provision he had made for their salvation by Jesus Christ. They wished for consolation, and he declared unto them glad tidings, and many felt the power and comfort of the doctrine of the cross.

**Verse 16. *Men of Israel***— Ye that are Jews by birth; and ye that fear God—ye that are proselytes to the Jewish religion. In this discourse Paul proves that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, sent from God, not only for the salvation of the Jews, but of the whole human race. And this he does, not with the rhetorician’s arts, but in a plain, simple detail of the history of Christ, and the most remarkable transactions of the people of God, which referred to his manifestation in the flesh. Rosenmuller.

**Verse 17. *The God of-our fathers***— The apostle begins his discourse with the Egyptian bondage, and their deliverance from it, as points the most remarkable and striking in their history; in which the providence and



mighty power of God, exerted so frequently in their behalf, were peculiarly conspicuous.

***Exalted the people***— Even when they were strangers in the land, and greatly oppressed, God exalted them; made them a terror to their enemies, and multiplied them greatly.

***With a high arm***— A literal translation of the Hebrew phrase, רמה בזרוע bezeroa ramah, with a lifted-up arm, to protect them and destroy their enemies. The meaning of the phrase is, a manifest display of the Divine power.

**Verse 18. *About the time of forty years***— The space of time between their coming out of Egypt, and going into the promised land.

***Suffered he their manners***— ετροποφορησεν αυτους; He dealt indulgently with them: howsoever they behaved towards him, he mercifully bore with, and kindly treated them. But instead of ετροποφορησεν, ACE, some others, with the Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Aethiopic, and some of the fathers, read ετροφοφορησεν, which signifies, he nourished and fed them, or bore them about in his arms as a tender nurse does her child. This reading confirms the marginal conjecture, and agrees excellently with the scope of the place, and is a reading at least of equal value with that in the commonly received text. Griesbach has admitted it, and excluded the other. Both, when rightly understood, speak nearly the same sense; but the latter is the most expressive, and agrees best with Paul's discourse, and the history to which he alludes. See the same form of expression, Numbers 11:12; Exodus 19:4; Isaiah 46:3, 4; 63:9.

**Verse 19. *Destroyed seven nations***— The Canaanites, Hittites, Girgasites, Amorites, Hivites, Peresites, and Jebusites. The rabbins frequently call them שבעה אומות Shebaah Omoth, the Seven Nations.

**Verse 20. *And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years***— This is a most difficult passage, and has been termed by Scaliger, Crux Chronologorum. The apostle seems here to contradict the account in 1 Kings 6:1: And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the

land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, he began to build the house of the Lord.

Sir Norton Knatchbull, in his annotations upon difficult texts, has considered the various solutions proposed by learned men of the difficulty before us; and concludes that the words of the apostle should not be understood as meaning how long God gave them judges, but when he gave them; and therefore proposes that the first words of this verse, **και μετα ταυτα, ως ετεσι τετρακοσιοις και πενηκοντα**, should be referred to the words going before, Acts 13:17, that is, to the time WHEN the God of the children of Israel chose their fathers.

“Now this time wherein God may properly be said to have chosen their fathers, about 450 years before he gave them judges, is to be computed from the birth of Isaac, in whom God may properly be said to have chosen their fathers; for God, who had chosen Abraham out of all the people of the earth, chose Isaac at this time out of the children of Abraham, in whose family the covenant was to rest. To make this computation evident, let us observe that from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob are 60 years; from thence to their going into Egypt, 130; from thence to the exodus, 210; from thence to their entrance into Canaan, 40; from that to the division of the land (about which time it is probable they began to settle their government by judges) 7 years; which sums make 447: viz.  $60 + 130 + 210 + 40 + 7 = 447$ . And should this be reckoned from the year before the birth of Isaac, when God established his covenant between himself and Abraham, and all his seed after him, Genesis 17:19, at which time God properly chose their fathers, then there will be 448 years, which brings it to within two years of the 450, which is sufficiently exact to bring it within the apostle's **ως**, about, or nearly.

“Some have made the period 452 years; which, though two years more than the apostle's round number, is still sufficiently reconcilable with his qualifying particle **ως**, about. And it may be added that the most correct writers often express a sum totally, but not exactly: so, with Demosthenes and Plautus, we find that called a talent where some drachms were either wanting or abounding.”

The sacred writers often express themselves in the same way: e.g. He made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other; and a line of thirty

cubits did compass it about. Now we know that the circumference of any circle is only in round numbers to its diameter as three to one; but, correctly, is considerably more, nearly as 22 to 7. But even the Spirit of God does not see it necessary to enter into such niceties, which would only puzzle, and not instruct the common reader.

Calmet has paraphrased these passages nearly to the same sense: the text may be thus connected; Acts 13:19. And having destroyed; seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot, about one hundred and fifty years after. And afterwards he gave them judges, to the time of Samuel the prophet. The paraphrase of Calmet is the following: “The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers in the person of Abraham; he promised him the land of Canaan; and four hundred and fifty years after this promise, and the birth of Isaac, who was the son and heir of the promise, he put them in possession of that land which he had promised so long before.” As this view of the subject removes all the principal difficulties, I shall not trouble my reader with other modes of interpretation.

**Verse 21. *Saul the son of Cis***— In all proper names quoted from the Old Testament, we should undoubtedly follow, as nearly as possible, the same orthography: קיש Kish, was the name of this king’s father, and so we spell it in the Old Testament, and yet have transformed it into Cis in the New, where the orthography is almost entirely lost.

***The space of forty years.***— Reckoning from the time of his anointing by Samuel to the time of his death, from A.M. 2909 to 2949.

**Verse 22. *David—a man after mine own heart***— That is, a man who would rule the kingdom according to God’s will. Dr. Benson’s observation on this point is very judicious: “When it is said that David was a man after God’s own heart, it should be understood, not of his private, but of his public, character. He was a man after God’s own heart, because he ruled the people according to the Divine will. He did not allow of idolatry; he did not set up for absolute power. He was guided in the government of the nation by the law of Moses, as the standing rule of government, and by the prophet, or the Divine oracle, whereby God gave directions upon particular emergencies. Whatever Saul’s private character was, he was not a good king in Israel. He did not follow the law, the oracle, and the

prophet; but attempted to be absolute, and thereby to subvert the constitution of the kingdom. That this was the meaning of David's being a man after God's own heart will easily appear by comparing 1 Samuel 15:28; 28:17, 18; 1 Chronicles 10:13, 14; Psalm 78:70, etc.; Psalm 89:20, etc."

**Verse 23. *Of this man's seed hath God-raised-a Savior***— That Jesus Christ came in a direct and indisputable line from David, according to both promise and prophecy, may be seen in the notes on Matthew 1:1, etc., and particularly in the notes at the end of Luke. And that the Messiah was promised to come from the family of David, see Isaiah 11:1, 2, and Jeremiah 23:5, 6.

**Verse 24. *John-preached-the baptism of repentance***— On the nature and effects of John's preaching, see the notes on Matthew 3:1, etc., and Luke 3:10-15.

**Verse 25. *As John fulfilled his course***— As John was fulfilling his race, he said, etc. It has been supposed that the word *δρομον*, course, or race, is used here to point out the short duration of the Baptist's ministry, and the fervent zeal with which he performed it. It signifies properly his ministry, or life. A man's work, employment, function, etc., is his race, course, or way of life. John had a ministry from God; and he discharged the duties of it with zeal and diligence; bore the fatigues of it with patience and resignation; and was gloriously successful in it, because the hand of the Lord was with him.

**Verse 26. *Men and brethren***— This should have been translated brethren simply. See the note on Acts 7:2.

***Children of the stock of Abraham***— All ye that are Jews.

***And whosoever among you feared God***— That is, all ye who are Gentiles, and are now proselytes to the Jewish religion.

***The word of this salvation***— The doctrine that contains the promise of deliverance from sin, and the means by which it is brought about; all which is founded on Jesus, of the stock of David, dying and rising again for the salvation of Jews and Gentiles.

**Verse 27. *Because they knew him not***— A gentle excuse for the persecuting high priests, etc. They did not know that Jesus was the Christ, because they did not know the prophets: and why did they not know the prophets, which were read every Sabbath day? Because they did not desire to know his will; and therefore they knew not the doctrine of God: nor did they know that, in condemning Christ, they fulfilled those very Scriptures which were read every Sabbath day in their synagogues.

**Verse 28. *They found no cause of death in him***— No reason why he should be condemned. Though they accused him of several things, yet they could not substantiate the most trifling charge against him; and yet, in opposition to all justice and equity, desired Pilate to put him to death! This points their perfidy in the strongest light.

**Verse 29. *They took him down from the tree***— The apostle passes rapidly over several circumstances of his death, that he might establish the fact of his resurrection.

**Verse 30. *But God raised him from the dead***— And thus gave the fullest proof of his innocence. God alone can raise the dead; and he would not work a miracle so very extraordinary, but on some extraordinary occasion.

**Verse 31. *He was seen many days***, etc.— The thing was done but a very short time since; and many of the witnesses are still alive, and ready to attest the fact of this resurrection in the most unequivocal manner.

**Verse 32. *We declare unto you glad tidings***— We proclaim that Gospel to you which is the fulfillment of the promise made unto the fathers.

**Verse 33. *Written in the second Psalm***— Instead of *τω ψαλμω τω δευτερω* the second Psalm, *πρωτω ψαλμω*, the first Psalm, is the reading of D, and its Itala version, and several of the primitive fathers. Griesbach has received it into the text; but not, in my opinion, on sufficient evidence. The reason of these various readings is sufficiently evident to those who are acquainted with Hebrew MSS. In many of these, two Psalms are often written as one; and the first and second Psalms are written as one in seven of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS. Those who possessed such MSS. would say, as it is written in the FIRST Psalm; those who referred to MSS. where the two Psalms were separate, would say, in the SECOND Psalm, as they would find the quotation in question in the first

verse of the second Psalm. There is, therefore, neither contradiction nor difficulty here; and it is no matter which reading we prefer, as it depends on the simple circumstance, whether we consider these two Psalms as parts of one and the same, or whether we consider them as two distinct Psalms.

*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*— It has been disputed whether this text should be understood of the incarnation or of the resurrection of our Lord. If understood of his incarnation, it can mean no more than this, that the human nature of our blessed Lord was begotten by the energy of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the blessed virgin; for as to his Divine nature, which is allotted to be God, it could neither be created nor begotten. See some reasons offered for this on Luke 1:35; and, if those be deemed insufficient, a thousand more may be added. But in the above reasons it is demonstrated that the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is absolutely irreconcilable to reason, and contradictory to itself. ETERNITY is that which has had no beginning, nor stands in any reference to time: SON supposes time, generation, and father; and time also antecedent to such generation: therefore the rational conjunction of these two terms, Son and eternity, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and opposite ideas.

If the passage in question be understood of the resurrection of Christ, it points out that the human nature, which was produced by the power of God in the womb of the virgin, and which was the Son of God, could see no corruption; and therefore, though it died for sin, must be raised from the dead before it saw corruption. Thus God owned that human nature to be peculiarly his own; and therefore Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, Romans 1:4.

**Verse 34.** *No more to return to corruption*— To the grave, to death, the place and state of corruption; for so we should understand the word *διαφθοραν* in the text.

*The sure mercies of David.*— *τα οσια δαβιδ τα πιστα.* These words are quoted literatim from the Septuagint version of Isaiah 55:3; where the Hebrew is *חַסְדֵי דָוִד הַנְּאֻמִּים* chasdey David ha-neemanim, of which the Greek is a faithful translation; and which sure mercies of David St. Paul considers as being fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. From this

application of the words, it is evident that the apostle considered the word David as signifying the Messiah; and then the sure or faithful mercies, being such as relate to the new covenant, and the various blessings promised in it, are evidently those which are sealed and confirmed to mankind by the resurrection of Christ; and it is in this way that the apostle applies them. Had there not been the fullest proof of the resurrection of Christ, not one of the promises of the new covenant could have been considered as sure or faithful. If he did not rise from the dead, then, as said the apostle, your faith and our preaching are vain, 1 Corinthians 15:14.

The following observations of Bp. Pearce are judicious: “For the sense of these words, we must have recourse to what God said to David in 2 Samuel 7:11, 12, etc., explained by what is said in Psalm 89:3, 4, 28, 29, 36, where frequent mention is made of a covenant established by God with David, and sworn to by God, that David’s seed should endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven, and as the sun, to all generations. This covenant and this oath are the sure and sacred things of which Isaiah, Isaiah 55:3, speaks; and Luke in this place. And Paul understood them as relating to the kingdom of Jesus, (the Son of David,) which was to be an everlasting kingdom; and if an everlasting one, then it was necessary that Jesus should have been (as he was) raised from the dead; and, to support this argument, Paul, in the next verse, strengthens it with another, drawn from Psalm 16:10.” See also the note among the marginal readings.

**Verse 36. *David-fell on sleep-and saw corruption***— David died, was buried, and never rose again; therefore, David cannot be the person spoken of here: the words are true of some other person; and they can be applied to Jesus Christ only; and in him they are most exactly fulfilled. See the notes on Acts 2:29, 30, etc.

**Verse 38. *Be it known unto you, therefore***— This is the legitimate conclusion: seeing the word of God is true, and he has promised an endless succession to the seed of David; seeing David and all his family have failed in reference to the political kingdom, a spiritual kingdom and a spiritual succession must be intended, that the sure covenant and all its blessings may be continued. Again: seeing the person by whom this is to be done is to see no corruption;-seeing David has died, and has seen (fallen under the power of) corruption;-seeing Jesus the Christ has wrought all the miracles

which the prophets said he should work;-seeing he has suffered all the indignities which your prophets said he must suffer;-seeing after his death he has most incontestably risen again from the dead, and has not fallen under the power of corruption,-then he must be the very person in whom all the predictions are fulfilled, and the person through whom all the blessings of the covenant must come.

***Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins***— See the notes on Acts 5:30, 31. Remission of sins, the removal of the power, guilt, and pollution of sin comes alone through this man, whom ye crucified, and who is risen from the dead.

**Verse 39. *And by him***— On his account, and through him, all that believe in his Divine mission, and the end for which he has been manifested, namely, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, are justified from all things, from the guilt of all transgressions committed against God; from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses; because it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, or any other rite or service of this kind, could take away sin from the soul, cancel its guilt in the conscience, or make an atonement to the Divine justice; but this is the sacrifice which God has required; this is every way suited to the end for which it has been instituted; and this is the sacrifice alone which God can accept. Your law says, “Do this, and ye shall live;” and, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” Ye have not done these things required; ye have not continued in any good thing; ye have not only not done all things commanded, but ye have done none, none as they ought to be done; and therefore ye are under the curse. The Gospel says, Believe on the Lord Jesus; credit his Divine mission; consider his death an atonement for sin; believe in his resurrection, as a proof that the atonement is made, believe that he suffered, died, and rose again for your justification; and that for his sake God, though he be infinitely just, can be the justifier of all who believe in him. By the law of Moses there is neither justification nor salvation: in Jesus Christ there are both, and all the sure mercies of David. Therefore, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.



**Verse 40. *Beware-lest that come upon you***, etc.— If you reject these benefits, now freely offered to you in this preaching of Christ crucified, you may expect such judgment from the hand of God as your forefathers experienced, when, for their rebellion and their contempt of his benefits, their city was taken, their temple destroyed, and themselves either slain by the sword, or carried into captivity. It is evident that St. Paul refers to Habakkuk 1:5-10; and in those verses the desolation by the Chaldeans is foretold. Never was there a prophecy more correctly and pointedly applied. These Jews did continue to slight the benefits offered to them by the Lord; and they persevered in their rebellion: what was the consequence? The Romans came, took their city, burnt their temple, slew upwards of a million of them, and either carried or sold the rest into captivity. How exactly was the prophecy in both cases fulfilled!

**Verse 41. *Behold, ye despisers***— There is a remarkable difference here between the Hebrew text in Habakkuk, and that in the Septuagint, which is a little abridged here by St. Paul. I shall exhibit the three texts. Heb: —

והביטו והתמהו תמהו כי פעל בימיכם לא תאמינו כי יפר  
 Reu bagoyim vehabitu vehitammehu; temehu; ki poal poel  
 bimeycem, lo teaminu hi yesupar.

Behold, ye among the heathen, (nations,) and regard, and be astonished; be astonished, for I am working a work in your days, which; when it shall be told, ye will not credit. See Houbigant.

Sept. ἰδετε οἱ καταφρονηται, και επιβλεψατε, και θαυμασατε  
 θαυμασια, και αφανισθητε· διοτι εργον εγω εργαζομαι εν ταις  
 ημεραις υμων, ο ου μη πιστευσητε, εαν τις εκδιηγηται υμιν. See,  
 ye despisers, and look attentively, and be astonished, (or hide yourselves,)  
 for I work a work in your days, which, if any one will tell to you, ye will  
 not believe.

St. Luke. ἰδετε οἱ καταφρονηται, (και επιβλεψατε,) και θαυμασατε,  
 (θαυμασια,) και αφανισθητε· οτι εργον εγω εργαζομαι εν ταις  
 ημεραις υμων, εργον ω ου μη πιστευσητε, εαν τις εκδιηγηται  
 υμιν. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and be astonished, (or hide  
 yourselves,) for I work a work in your days, which, if any one will tell  
 unto you, ye will not believe.

I have taken Luke's quotation from the best MSS., and I have quoted the Septuagint according to the Codex Alerandrinus; and the quotations are exactly the same, not only in words, but almost in letters, with the exception of *επιβλεψατε* and *θαυμασια* which the evangelist omits, and which I have included in crotchets in the text of St. Luke, merely that the place of the omission may be the better seen. It may now be necessary to inquire how St. Luke and the Septuagint should substitute ye despisers, for ye among the heathen, in the Hebrew text?

Without troubling myself or my readers with laborious criticisms on these words, with which many learned men have loaded the text, I will simply state my opinion, that the prophet, instead of *בגויִם* bagoyim, among the heathen, wrote *בגדִים* bogadim, despisers, or transgressors: a word which differs only in a single letter, *ד* dalet, for *ו* vau; the latter of which might easily be mistaken by a transcriber for the other, especially if the horizontal stroke of the *ד* dalet happened to be a little faint towards the left; as, in that case, it would wear the appearance of a *ו* vau; and this is not unfrequently the case, not only in MSS., but even in printed books. It seems as evident as it can well be that this gives the word which the Septuagint found in the copy from which they translated: their evidence, and that of the apostle, joined to the consideration that the interchange of the two letters mentioned above might have been easily made, is quite sufficient to legitimate the reading for which I contend. Houbigant and several others are of the same mind.

The word *αφανισθητε*, which we translate perish, signifies more properly disappear, or hide yourselves; as people, astonished and alarmed at some coming evil, betake themselves to flight, and hide themselves in order to avoid it.

**Verse 42. *When the Jews were gone out***— That part of them in whom the words of the prophet were fulfilled, viz. those who, though they had the clearest relation of so interesting a history, would not believe it: they shut their eyes against the light, and hardened their hearts against the truth. There were other Jews in the assembly that did believe, and were saved.

***The Gentiles besought***— There is some doubt whether the original, *παρεκαλουν τα εθνη*, should be translated the Gentiles besought; or

they besought the Gentiles: for the words will bear either, but the latter sense more naturally. When the Jews retired, determining not to credit what was spoken, the apostle, seeing the Gentiles of a better mind, requested them to come and hear those words, or doctrines, the next Sabbath. But, the next, **το μεταξυ**, as Hiesychius defines it, **μετ' ολιγον, ανα μεσον**, shortly, or betwixt, may mean the after part of the same Sabbath, or the course of the ensuing week, between the two Sabbaths; for Mondays and Thursdays, or the second and fifth days of the week, were times in which those who feared God usually met together in the synagogue; for it is a maxim with the rabbins, that no three days should elapse without reading of the law.

On this verse there is a great number of various readings: instead of, when the Jews were going out of the synagogue, ABCDE, several others of great repute, with all the Syriac, the Coptic, AETHiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, and Itala, read, As they were going out, they entreated that these words should be preached unto them in the course of the week, or the next Sabbath. So that, according to this well accredited reading, the words, **εκ της συναγωγης των ιουδαιων**, are left out in the first clause, **αυτων** being put in their place; and **τα εθνη**, the Gentiles, is wholly omitted in the second clause. The most eminent critics approve of this reading; indeed it stands on such authority as to render it almost indubitable. Of the **αυτων**, them, which is substituted for the first clause, Professor White says, *lectio indubie genuina*: this reading is undoubtedly genuine; and of the **τα εθνη εις**, he says, *certissime delenda*: they should certainly be expunged. We are therefore to understand the words thus: that, “as they were going out on the breaking up of the assembly, some of them desired that they might have these doctrines preached to them on the ensuing week or Sabbath.” And thus all the ambiguity of the verse vanishes.

**Verse 43. *Many of the Jews***— Direct descendants from some of the twelve tribes; and religious proselytes, heathens who had been converted to Judaism, and, having submitted to circumcision, had become proselytes of the covenant: though some think that the expression means proselytes of the gate—persons who believed in one God, like the Jews, but who had not received circumcision.

***Persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.***— That is, that they should continue to credit the Gospel; to receive the spirit and influence of it; to bring forth the fruits of that spirit; and thus continue under the favor and approbation of God.

**Verse 44. *The next Sabbath day***— The good news had spread far and wide, by means of the converted Jews and proselytes.

***Almost the whole city***— Jews, proselytes, and Gentiles, came together to hear **τον λογον του θεου**, this doctrine of God, this Divine teaching, by which so many of their kindred and acquaintance had become so wise and happy. It is not by public discourses merely that people are converted to God; but by the private teaching and godly conduct of those who have received the truth; for, as these are scattered throughout society, they are leaven in every place.

**Verse 45. *The Jews-were filled with envy***— See on Acts 5:17. These could not bear the Gentiles, who believed in Christ, to be equal with them; and yet; according to the Gospel, it was really the case.

***Contradicting***— The arguments and statements brought forward by the disciples; and blaspheming, speaking impiously and injuriously of Jesus Christ. This is probably what is meant.

**Verse 46. *Waxed bold***— **παρρησιασαμενοι**; Having great liberty of speech; a strong, persuasive, and overpowering eloquence. They had eternal truth for the basis of this discourse; a multitude of incontestable facts to support it; an all-persuading eloquence to illustrate and maintain what they had asserted.

***Should first have been spoken to you***— When our Lord gave his apostles their commission to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, he told them they must begin first at Jerusalem, Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47. In obedience therefore to this command, the apostles (in every place where they preached) made their first offers of the Gospel to the Jews.

***Ye put it from you***— **απωθεισθε αυτον**, Ye disdain this doctrine, and consider it contemptible: so the word is frequently used.

***And judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life***— Was this meant as a strong irony? “Ye have such humbling thoughts of yourselves, that ye think the blessings of the Gospel too good to be bestowed on such worthless wretches as ye are.” Or did the apostle mean that, by their words and conduct on this occasion, they had passed sentence on themselves, and, in effect, had decided that they were unworthy of the grace of the Gospel; and God now ratifies that judgment by removing those blessings from them, and sending them to the Gentiles?

**Verse 47. *For so the Lord commanded us***— The apostles could quote a pertinent scripture for every thing they did; because the outlines of the whole Gospel dispensation are founded in the law and the prophets; and they were now building the Church of God according to the pattern shown them in the Mount. In the things of God, no man nor minister should go farther than he can say, Thus it is written, and thus it behoves me to do; and let him see that his quotations are fairly made, and not a detached passage or member of a sentence produced, because it seems to look like the system he wishes to establish.

***I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles***— This quotation is from Isaiah 49:6, and was most fully in point. The Jews could not resist the testimony of their own prophet; and the Gentiles rejoiced to find that the offers of salvation were to be made so specifically to them.

***For salvation unto the ends of the earth.***— The very name of the Messiah, viz JESUS, announced the design and end of his mission. He is the Savior, and is to be proclaimed as such to the ends of the earth; to all mankind; to every nation, and people, and tongue; and, wherever the Gospel is preached, there is a free, full, and sincere offer of salvation to every soul that hears it. And the offer is proof sufficient, in itself, that there is a power to receive its blessings given to those to whom the offer is made; as it would be of no use to offer them a salvation which it was designed they either should not or could not receive. A son of Satan might be capable of such dissimulation and bad faith; but the holy God cannot.

**Verse 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.***— This text has been most pitifully misunderstood. Many suppose that it simply means that those in that assembly who were fore-ordained; or predestinated by God’s decree, to eternal life, believed under the influence

of that decree. Now, we should be careful to examine what a word means, before we attempt to fix its meaning. Whatever **τεταγμενοι** may mean, which is the word we translate ordained, it is neither **προτεταγμενοι** nor **προορισμενοι** which the apostle uses, but simply **τεταγμενοι**, which includes no idea of pre-ordination or pre-destination of any kind. And if it even did, it would be rather hazardous to say that all those who believed at this time were such as actually persevered unto the end, and were saved unto eternal life. But, leaving all these precarious matters, what does the word **τεταγμενος** mean? The verb **ταττω** or **τασσω** signifies to place, set, order, appoint, dispose; hence it has been considered here as implying the disposition or readiness of mind of several persons in the congregation, such as the religious proselytes mentioned Acts 13:43, who possessed the reverse of the disposition of those Jews who spake against those things, contradicting and blaspheming, Acts 13:45. Though the word in this place has been variously translated, yet, of all the meanings ever put on it, none agrees worse with its nature and known signification than that which represents it as intending those who were predestinated to eternal life: this is no meaning of the term, and should never be applied to it. Let us, without prejudice, consider the scope of the place: the Jews contradicted and blasphemed; the religious proselytes heard attentively, and received the word of life: the one party were utterly indisposed, through their own stubbornness, to receive the Gospel; the others, destitute of prejudice and prepossession, were glad to hear that, in the order of God, the Gentiles were included in the covenant of salvation through Christ Jesus; they, therefore, in this good state and order of mind, believed. Those who seek for the plain meaning of the word will find it here: those who wish to make out a sense, not from the Greek word, its use among the best Greek writers, and the obvious sense of the evangelist, but from their own creed, may continue to puzzle themselves and others; kindle their own fire, compass themselves with sparks, and walk in the light of their own fire, and of the sparks which they have kindled; and, in consequence, lie down in sorrow, having bidden adieu to the true meaning of a passage so very simple, taken in its connection, that one must wonder how it ever came to be misunderstood and misapplied. Those who wish to see more on this verse may consult Hammond, Whitby, Schoettgen, Rosenmuller, Pearce, Sir Norton Knatchbull, and Dodd.

**Verse 49. *The word of the Lord was published***, etc.— Those who had come from different parts, and were converted, carried the glad tidings to their respective neighbourhoods; and thus the doctrine was published throughout all the region of Pisidia, where they then were. See on Acts 13:44.

**Verse 50. *Devout and honorable women***— It is likely that these were heathen matrons, who had become proselytes to the Jewish religion; and, as they were persons of affluence and respectability, they had considerable influence with the civil magistracy of the place, and probably their husbands were of this order; and it is likely that they used that influence, at the instigation of the Jews, to get the apostles expelled from the place.

**Verse 51. *They shook off the dust of their feet against them***— This was a very significant rite; by it, they in effect said: Ye are worse than the heathen: even your very land is accursed for your opposition to God, and we dare not permit even its dust to cleave to the soles of our feet; and we shake it off, in departing from your country, according to our Lord's command, (Matthew 10:14,) for a testimony against you, that we offered you salvation, but ye rejected it and persecuted us. The Jews, when travelling in heathen countries, took care, when they came to the borders of their own, to shake off the dust of their feet, lest any of the unhallowed ground should defile the sacred land of Israel.

***Came unto Iconium***.— According to Strabo, Iconium was a small fortified town, the capital of Lycaonia, at present called Cogni. "Lycaonia was a province at the back of Pamphylia, higher up in Asia Minor, and to the northeast of Pamphylia." Pearce.

**Verse 52. *The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost***.— Though in the world they had tribulation, yet in Christ they had peace; and, while engaged in their Master's work, they always had their Master's wages. The happiness of a genuine Christian lies far beyond the reach of earthly disturbances, and is not affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed. The martyrs were more happy in the flames than their persecutors could be on their beds of down.

St. Paul's sermon at Antioch has been thus analyzed.

1. His prologue, Acts 13:16, addressed to those who fear God.

2. His narrative of God's goodness to Israel: 1. In their deliverance from Egypt. 2. In their support in the wilderness. 3. In his giving them the land of Canaan. 4. In the judges and kings which he had given for their governors, Acts 13:7-22.
3. His proposition, that Jesus was the Christ, the Savior of the world, Acts 13:23.
4. The illustration of this proposition, proving its truth: 1. From Christ's stock and family, Acts 13:23. 2. From the testimony of his forerunner, Acts 13:24. 3. From the resurrection of Christ, Acts 13:30; which was corroborated with the testimony of many Galileans, Acts 13:31, and of the prophets, David, Acts 13:33, 35, and Isaiah, Acts 13:34.
5. He anticipates objections, relative to the unjust condemnation, death and burial of Christ, Acts 13:27-29.
6. His epilogue, in which he excites his audience to embrace the Gospel on two considerations: 1. The benefits which they receive who embrace the Gospel, Acts 13:38, 39. 2. The danger to which they were exposed who should despise and reject it, Acts 13:40, 41.



## CHAPTER 14.

*Paul and Barnabas, having preached at Iconium with great success, are persecuted, and obliged to flee to Lystra and Derbe, 1-6. Here they preach, and heal a cripple; on which, the people, supposing them to be gods, are about to offer them sacrifices, and are with difficulty prevented by these apostles, 7-18. Certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, coming thither, induce the people to stone Paul; who, being dragged out of the city as dead, while the disciples stand around him, rises up suddenly, and returns to the city, and the next day departs to Derbe, 19, 20. Having preached here, he and Barnabas return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the disciples, and ordaining elders in every Church, 21-23. They pass through Pisidia and Pamphylia, 24. Through Perga and Attalia, 25; and sail to Antioch in Syria, 26. When, having called the disciples together, they inform them of the door of faith opened to the Gentiles, and there abode a long time with the Church, 27, 28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14.

**Verse 1. *In Iconium***— See the conclusion of the preceding chapter.

***So spake***— και λαλησαι ουτως. With such power and demonstration of the Spirit, that a great multitude both of the Jews, genuine descendants of one or other of the twelve tribes, and also of the Greeks, ἑλληνων, probably such as were proselytes of the gate, believed, received the Christian religion as a revelation from God, and confided in its Author for salvation, according to the apostles' preaching.

**Verse 2. *Stirred up the Gentiles***— των εθνων, Such as were mere heathens, and thus distinguished from the Jews, and the Greeks who were proselytes.

***Evil affected***— εκακωσαν, Irritated or exasperated their minds against the brethren, the disciples of Christ; one of their appellations before they were called Christians at Antioch. See on Acts 11:26.

**Verse 3. *Long time therefore abode they***— Because they had great success, therefore they continued a long time, gaining many converts, and building up those who had believed, in their most holy faith; notwithstanding the opposition they met with, both from the unbelieving Jews and heathens.

***Speaking boldly***— *παρρησιαζομενοι*, Having great liberty of speech, a copious and commanding eloquence, springing from a consciousness of the truth which they preached.

***The word of his grace***— The Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the doctrine of God's grace, mercy, or favor to mankind.

***And granted signs and wonders to be done***— For no apostle could work a miracle by himself; nor was any sign or wonder wrought even by the greatest apostle, but by an especial grant or dispensation of God. This power was not resident in them at all times; it was only now and then communicated, when a miracle was necessary for the confirmation of the truth preached.

**Verse 4. *The multitude of the city was divided***— The Jews treated the apostles as false teachers, and their miracles as impositions; and many of the people held with them: while the others, who had not hardened their hearts against the truth, felt the force of it; and, being without prejudice, could easily discern the miracles to be the work of God, and therefore held with the apostles.

**Verse 5. *An assault made***— *ῥομη*, A desperate attempt was made by their rulers, i.e. by the heathen rulers of the people, and the rulers of the synagogue.

***To use them despitefully***— To expose them, bring them into contempt, and make them appear as monsters, or movers of sedition; and then to stone them for this falsely alleged crime.

**Verse 6. *They were ware of it***— They were informed of the scheme, and of the attempt that was about to be made, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe; they did not leave the province of Lycaonia, but went to other towns and cities. Lystra lay to the south and Derbe to the north of Iconium, according to the general opinion. Strabo, Geogr. lib. xii., tells us expressly, that

Iconium was within Lycaonia, Thence are the Lycaonian hills plain, cold, naked, and pastures for wild asses. About these places stands Iconium, a town built in a better soil. Ptolemy also, Tab. Asiae, i. cap. 6, places Iconium in Lycaonia. How comes it, then, that St. Luke does not call Iconium a city of Lycaonia, as well as Derbe and Lystra? Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. v. cap. 27, solves this difficulty, by stating, that there was granted a tetrarchy out of Lycaonia, on that side which borders upon Galatia, consisting of fourteen cities; the most famous of which is Iconium. See Lightfoot.

**Verse 7. *And there they preached the Gospel.***— Wherever they went, they were always employed in their Master's work. Some MSS. of considerable note add here, and all the people were moved at their preaching, but Paul and Barnabas tarried at Lystra.

**Verse 8. *Impotent in his feet***— *αδυνατος τοις ποσιν*, He had no muscular power, and probably his ankle bones were dislocated; or he had what is commonly termed club feet; this is the more likely, as he is said to have been lame from his mother's womb, and to have never walked.

**Verse 9. *That he had faith to be healed***— How did this faith come to this poor heathen? Why, by hearing the word of God preached: for it is said, the same heard Paul speak. And it appears that he credited the doctrine he heard, and believed that Jesus could, if he would, make him whole. Besides, he must have heard of the miracles which the apostles had wrought, see Acts 14:3; and this would raise his expectation of receiving a cure.

**Verse 10. *Said with a loud voice***— After this clause the following is found in CD, and several others, either in the text or margin: *σοι λεγω εν τω ονοματι του κυριου ιησου χριστου*, I say unto thee, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, "stand upright on thy feet." This reading is also in several versions; and though it may not stand on such evidence as to entitle it to a place in the text, yet it is not likely that St. Paul would not have used the sacred name on such an occasion; especially as this appears to have been the usual form. See Acts 3:6.

***He leaped and walked.***— Giving the fullest proof of his restoration: his leaping, however, might have been through joy of having received his cure.

**Verse 11. *Saying, in the speech of Lycaonia***— What this language was has puzzled the learned not a little. Calmet thinks it was a corrupt Greek dialect; as Greek was the general language of Asia Minor. Mr. Paul Ernest Jablonski, who has written a dissertation expressly on the subject, thinks it was the same language with that of the Cappadocians, which was mingled with Syriac. That it was no dialect of the Greek must be evident from the circumstance of its being here distinguished from it. We have sufficient proofs from ancient authors that most of these provinces used different languages; and it is correctly remarked, by Dr. Lightfoot, that the Carians, who dwelt much nearer Greece than the Lycaonians, are called by Homer, βαρβαροφωνοι, people of a barbarous or strange language; and Pausanias also called them Barbari. That the language of Pisidia was distinct from the Greek we have already seen, note on Acts 13:15. We have no light to determine this point; and every search after the language of Lycaonia must be, at this distance of time, fruitless.

***The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.***— From this, and from all heathen antiquity, it is evident: 1. That the heathen did not consider the Divine nature, how low soever they rated it, to be like the human nature. 2. That they imagined that these celestial beings often assumed human forms to visit men, in order to punish the evil and reward the good. The Metamorphoses of Ovid are full of such visitations; and so are Homer, Virgil, and other poets. The angels visiting Abraham, Jacob, Lot, etc., might have been the foundation on which most of these heathen fictions were built.

The following passage in HOMER will cast some light upon the point: —

και τε θεοι, ξεινοισιν εοικότες αλλοδαποισι,  
παντοιοι τελεθοντες, επιστρωφωσι ποληας,  
ανθρωπων υβριν τε και ευνομηνη εφορωντες.

Hom. Odys. xvii. ver. 485.

*For in similitude of strangers oft,  
The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,  
Repair to populous cities, where they mark  
The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.*

COWPER.

OVID had a similar notion, where he represents Jupiter coming down to visit the earth, which seems to be copied from Genesis, Genesis 18:20, 21: And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me: and if not, I will know.

*Contigerat nostras infamia temporis aures:  
Quam cupiens falsam, summo delabor Olympo.  
Et deus humana lustris sub imagine terras.  
Longa mora est, quantum noxae sit ubique repertum,  
Enamere: minor fuit ipsa infamia vero.*

*Metam. lib. i. ver. 211.*

*The clamours of this vile, degenerate age,  
The cries of orphans, and the oppressor's rage,  
Had reached the stars: "I will descend," said I,  
In hope to prove this loud complaint a lie.  
Disguised in human shape, I traveled round  
The world, and more than what I heard, I found.*

DRYDEN.

It was a settled belief among the Egyptians, that their gods, sometimes in the likeness of men, and sometimes in that of animals which they held sacred, descended to the earth, and traveled through different provinces, to punish, reward, and protect. The Hindoo Avatars, or incarnations of their gods, prove how generally this opinion had prevailed. Their Poorana are full of accounts of the descent of Brahma, Vishnoo, Shiva, Naradu, and other gods, in human shape. We need not wonder to find it in Lycaonia.

**Verse 12. *They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius***— The heathens supposed that Jupiter and Mercury were the gods who most frequently assumed the human form; and Jupiter was accustomed to take Mercury with him on such expeditions. Jupiter was the supreme god of the heathens; and Mercury was by them considered the god of eloquence. And the ancient fable, from which I have quoted so largely above, represents Jupiter and Mercury coming to this very region, where they were entertained by Lycaon, from whom the Lycaonians derived their name. See the whole fable in the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

As the ancients usually represented Jupiter as rather an aged man, large, noble, and majestic; and Mercury young, light, and active, the conjecture of Chrysostom is very probable, that Barnabas was a large, noble, well-made man, and probably in years; and St. Paul, young, active, and eloquent; on which account, they termed the former Jupiter, and the latter Mercury. That Mercury was eloquent and powerful in his words is allowed by the heathens; and the very epithet that is applied here to Paul, **ην ο ηγουμενος του λογου**, he was the chief or leader of the discourse, was applied to Mercury. So Jamblichus de Myster. Init. **θεος ο των λογων ηγεμων ο `ερμης**. And Macrobius, Sat. i. 8: Scimus Mercurium vocis et sermonis potentem. We know that Mercury is powerful both in his voice and eloquence. With the Lycaonians, the actions of these apostles proved them to be gods; and the different parts they took appeared to them to fix their character, so that one was judged to be Jupiter, and the other Mercury.

**Verse 13. *Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city***— There is a meaning here, which ordinary readers will not readily apprehend. Many cities were put under the protection of a particular deity; and the image of that deity placed at the entrance, to signify that he was the guardian and protector. To this St. Luke, every where as accurate as he is circumstantial, refers. Lystra, it appears, was under the guardianship of Jupiter Propulaius, **διος προπυλαιου**, which St. Luke translates, **του διος οντος της πολεως**, the Jupiter that was before the city, which is another term for Jupiter Custos, or Jupiter the guardian. All these deities, according to the attributes they sustained, had their peculiar priests, rites, and sacrifices; and each a peculiar service and priest for the office he bore; so that Jupiter Brontes, Jupiter the thunderer, had a different service from Jupiter Custos, Jove the guardian. Hence we can see with what accuracy St. Luke wrote: the person who was going to offer them sacrifices was the priest of Jupiter Custos, under whose guardianship the city of Lystra was, and whom the priest supposed had visited the city in a human form; and Barnabas, probably for the reasons already assigned, he imagined was the person; and as Mercury, the god of eloquence, was the general attendant of Jupiter, the people and the priest supposed that Paul, who had a powerful, commanding eloquence, was that god, also disguised. A beautiful figure of such an image of Jupiter as, I suppose, stood before the gate of

Lystra, still remains; and a fine engraving of it may be seen in Gruter's Inscriptions, vol. i. p. xx. Jupiter is represented naked, sitting on a curule or consular chair; in his right hand he holds his thunder, and a long staff in his left; at his right, stands the eagle prepared for flight; and, above, the winged cap and caduceus of Mercury. On the base is the inscription, IUPPITER CUSTOM DOMUS AUG. Jupiter, the guardian of the house of Augustus. As the preserver or guardian of towns, he was generally styled Jupiter Custos, Serenus and Servator. His name, JUPITER, i.e. jurans pater, the helping father, entitled him, in those days of darkness, to general regard. On this false god, who long engrossed the worship of even the most enlightened nations on the earth, much may be seen in Lactantius, Divinar. Institution. lib. i., in the Antiquite expliquée of Montfaucon; and various inscriptions, relative to his character as guardian, etc., may be seen in Gruter, as above.

*Oxen and garlands*— That is, oxen adorned with flowers, their horns gilded, and neck bound about with fillets, as was the custom in sacrificial rites. They also crowned the gods themselves, the priests, and gates of the temples, with flowers. Of this method of adorning the victims, there are numerous examples in the Greek and Latin writers. A few may suffice. Thus OVID: —

*Victima labe carens et praestantissima forma  
Sistitur ante aras; et vittis praesignis et auro.*

OVID, *Met. lib. xv. ver. 130.*

*The fairest victim must the powers appease,  
So fatal 'tis sometimes too much to please:  
A purple filet his broad brow adorns  
With flowery garlands, crown, and gilded horns.*

DRYDEN.

*Huic Anius niveis circumdata tempora vittis  
Concutiens, et tristis ait; —*

*Ibid. lib. xiii. ver. 643.*

*The royal prophet shook his hoary head,  
With fillets bound; and, sighing, thus he said —*

CALCOTT.

— *fovet ignibus aras,  
Muneribus deos implet: feriuntque secures  
Colla torosa boum victorum cornua vittis.*

*Ibid. lib. vii. ver. 427.*

*Rich curling fumes of incense feast the skies,  
A hecatomb of voted victims dies,  
With gilded horns, and garlands on their head,  
In all the pomp of death to th' altar led.*

TATE.

VIRGIL also refers to the same rites and circumstances: —

*Saepe in honore deum medio stans hostia ad aram  
Lanea dum nivea circumdatur infula vitta,  
Inter cunctantes cecidit moribunda ministros.*

*VIRG. Georg. lib. iii. ver. 486.*

*The victim ox that was for altars pressed,  
Trimmed with white ribbons, and with garlands dressed,  
Sunk of himself, without the god's command,  
Preventing the slow sacrificer's hand.*

DRYDEN.

Many similar examples may be seen in Wetstein and others.

At the time of worship, the Hindoo priests place garlands of flowers on the head of the image. Whether the garlands were intended to decorate the oxen or the apostles, we cannot say; but in either case the conduct of the Lycaonians was conformable to that of the modern Hindoos.

**Verse 15.** *We also are men of like passions with you*— This saying of the apostles has been most strangely perverted. A pious commentator, taking the word passion in its vulgar and most improper sense, (a bad temper, an evil propensity,) and supposing that these holy men wished to confess that they also had many sinful infirmities, and wrong tempers, endeavors to illustrate this sense of the word, by appealing to the contention of Paul and Barnabas, etc., etc. But the expression means no more than, “we are truly human beings, with the same powers and appetites as your own; need food and raiment as you do; and are all mortal like yourselves.”



***That ye should turn from these vanities***— That is, from these idols and false gods. How often false gods and idolatry are termed vanity in the Scriptures, no careful reader of the Bible needs to be told. What a bold saying was this in the presence of a heathen mob, intent on performing an act of their superstitious worship, in which they no doubt thought the safety of the state was concerned. The ancient fable related by Ovid, *Metam. lib. i. ver. 211-239*, to which reference has already been made, will cast some light on the conduct of the Lystrians in this case. The following is its substance:—"Jupiter, having been informed of the great degeneracy of mankind, was determined himself to survey the earth. Coming to this province, (Lycaonia,) disguised in human shape, he took up his residence at the palace of Lycaon, then king of that country: giving a sign of his godhead, the people worship him: Lycaon sneers, doubts his divinity, and is determined to put it to the trial. Some ambassadors from the Molossian state having just arrived, he slew one of them, boiled part of his flesh, and roasted the rest, and set it before Jupiter: the god, indignant at the insult, burnt the palace, and turned the impious king into a wolf." From this time, or, rather, from this fable, the whole province was called Lycaonia. The simple people now seeing such proofs of supernatural power, in the miracles wrought by Barnabas and Paul, thought that Jupiter had again visited them; and fearing lest they should meet with his indignation, should they neglect duly to honor him, they brought oxen and garlands, and would have offered them sacrifice, had they not been prevented by the apostles themselves. This circumstance will account for their whole conduct; and shows the reason why Jupiter was the tutelar god of the place. As, therefore, the people took them for gods, it was necessary for the apostles to show that they were but men; and this is the whole that is meant by the **ομοιοπαθεις ανθρωποι**, men of like passions, fellow mortals, in the text, which has been so pitifully mistaken by some, and abused by others.

***The living God***— Widely different from those stocks and stones, which were objects of their worship.

***Which made heaven and earth***— And as all things were made by his power, so all subsist by his providence; and to him alone, all worship, honor, and glory are due.

**Verse 16. *Who in times past suffered all nations***, etc.— The words *παντα τα εθνη*, which we here translate, all nations, should be rendered, all the Gentiles, merely to distinguish them from the Jewish people: who having a revelation, were not left to walk in their own ways; but the heathens, who had not a revelation, were suffered to form their creed, and mode of worship, according to their own caprice.

**Verse 17. *He left not himself without witness***— Though he gave the Gentiles no revelation of his will, yet he continued to govern them by his gracious providence; doing them good in general; giving them rain to fertilize their grounds, and fruitful seasons as the result; so that grass grew for the cattle and corn for the service of man.

***Filling our hearts with food***— Giving as much food as could reasonably be wished, so that gladness, or general happiness, was the result. Such was the gracious provision made for man, at all times, that the economy and bounty of the Divine Being were equally evidenced by it. He never gives less than is necessary, nor more than is sufficient. His economy forbids men to waste, by going them in general no profusion. His bounty forbids them to want, by giving as much as is sufficient for all the natural wants of his creatures. By not giving too much, he prevents luxury and riot: by giving enough, he prevents discontent and misery. Thus he does mankind good, by causing his rain to descend upon the just and the unjust, and his sun to shine upon the evil, and the good. Thus he is said not to have left himself without witness: for his providential dealings are the witnesses of his being, his wisdom, and his bounty; and thus the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, were clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, Romans 1:20. Therefore those who continued to worship stocks and stones were without excuse. These were great and striking truths; and into what detail the apostles now went, we cannot say; but it is likely that they spoke much more than is here related, as the next verse states that, with all these sayings, they found it difficult to prevent the people from offering them sacrifice.

**Verse 19. *There came thither certain Jews from Antioch***— Those were, no doubt, the same who had raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, at Iconium and Antioch, before: they followed the apostles with implacable malice; and what they could not do themselves they endeavored

to do by others, whose minds they first perverted, and then irritated to deeds of fell purpose.

***And having stoned Paul***— Alas! of what real worth is popular fame? How uncertain, and how unworthy to be counted! These poor heathens acted just like the people of Malta, Acts 28:4-6. When the viper fastened on the hand of Paul, they concluded he was a murderer: when they found it did him no damage, they changed their minds, and said he was a GOD! When the Lycaonians saw the miracles that Paul did, they said he was the god Mercury: when the persecuting Jews came, they persuaded them that he was an impostor; and then they endeavored to stone him to death.

***Supposing he had been dead.***— They did not leave stoning him till they had the fullest evidence that he was dead; and so, most probably, he was.

**Verse 20. *The disciples stood round about him***— No doubt in earnest prayer, entreating the Author of life that his soul might again return to its battered tenement.

***He rose up***— Miraculously restored, not only to life, but to perfect soundness so that he was able to walk into the city, that his persecutors might see the mighty power of God in his restoration, and the faith of the young converts be confirmed in the truth and goodness of God. It is strange that neither the young converts at Lystra, nor Barnabas, were involved in this persecution! It seems to have had Paul alone for its object; and, when they thought they had despatched him, they did not think of injuring the rest.

**Verse 21. *Preached the Gospel to that city***— Derbe, a city in the same province. See on Acts 14:6.

***They returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium***— Behold the courage of these Christian men! They counted not their lives dear to them, and returned to do their Masters work in the very places in which they had been so grievously persecuted, and where one of them had been apparently stoned to death! The man who knows he is God's ambassador, and that his life depends on his fidelity to his Master, knows he has nothing but his God to fear.

**Verse 22. *Confirming the souls of the disciples***— The word disciple signifies literally a scholar. The Church of Christ was a school, in which Christ himself was chief Master; and his apostles subordinate teachers. All the converts were disciples or scholars, who came to this school to be instructed in the knowledge of themselves and of their GOD: of their duty to Him, to the Church, to society, and to themselves. After having been initiated in the principles of the heavenly doctrine, they needed line upon line, and precept upon precept, in order that they might be confirmed and established in the truth. Though it was a great and important thing to have their heads, their understanding, properly informed, yet, if the heart was not disciplined, information in the understanding would be of little avail; therefore they confirmed the SOULS of the disciples. As there must be some particular standard of truth, to which they might continually resort, that their faith might stand in the power of God, it was necessary that they should have such a system of doctrine as they knew came from God. These doctrines were those which contained all the essential principles of Christianity, and this was called THE FAITH; and, as they must have sound principles, in order that they might have righteous practices, so it was necessary that they should continue in that faith, that it might produce that obedience, without which even faith itself, however excellent, must be useless and dead.

Again, as the spirit of the world would be ever opposed to the spirit of Christ, so they must make up their minds to expect persecution and tribulation in various forms, and therefore had need of confirmed souls and strong faith, that, when trials came, they might meet them with becoming fortitude, and stand unmoved in the cloudy and dark day. And as the mind must faint under trouble that sees no prospect of its termination, and no conviction of its use, it was necessary that they should keep in view the kingdom of God, of which they were subjects, and to which, through their adoption into the heavenly family, they had a Divine right. Hence, from the apostles teaching, they not only learned that they should meet with tribulation, much tribulation, but, for their encouragement, they were also informed that these were the very means which God would use to bring them into his own kingdom; so that, if they had tribulation in the way,

they had a heaven of eternal glory as the end to which they were continually to direct their views.

**Verse 23. *When they had ordained them elders***— Elder seems to be here the name of an office. These were all young or new converts, and yet among them the apostles constitute elders. They appointed persons the most experienced, and the most advanced in the Divine life, to watch over and instruct the rest. But what is the meaning of the word **χειροτονησαντες**, which we translate ordained? The word ordain we use in an ecclesiastical sense, and signify by it the appointment of a person to an office in the Church, by the imposition of the hands of those who are rulers in that Church. But **χειροτονια** signifies the holding up or stretching out the hand, as approving of the choice of any person to a particular work: whereas **χειροθεσια** signifies the imposition of hands. “Zonaras gives the proper meaning of the word in the text, in his Scholia upon the first canon of the apostles, **νυν μεν χειροτονια καλειται, κ. τ. λ.** ‘Nowadays, a course of prayers and invocation on the Holy Spirit, when one is initiated into the priesthood, and receives consecration, is called **χειροτονια**, cheirotonia, so termed because the bishop extends his hand over him whom he blesses, when he is chosen into holy orders. Anciently, the choice or suffrage was called cheirotonia; for, when it was lawful for the multitude in their cities to choose their priests or bishops, they met together, and some chose one man, some another; but, that it might appear whose suffrage won, they say the electors did use **εκτεινειν τας χειρας**, to stretch forth their hands, and by their hands so stretched forth, or up, they were numbered who chose the one, and who the other; and him who was elected by the most suffrages they placed in the high priesthood. And from hence was the name cheirotonia taken, which the fathers of the councils are found to have used, calling their suffrage cheirotonia.’ St. Paul, 2 Corinthians 8:19, intimates that St. Luke was thus appointed to travel with him **χειροτονηθεις υπο των εκκλησιων**, who was chosen of the Churches. Ignatius, in his epistle to the Philadelphians, uses the same term, **πρεπον εστιν υμιν, ως εκκλησια θεου, χειροτονησαι επισκοπον**, ye ought, as a Church of God, to choose your bishop.” Much more on this subject may be seen in Sir Norton Knatchbull, who contends that cheirotonia implies simply appointment or election, but not what he calls ordination by the imposition of hands. I believe the

simple truth to be this, that in ancient times the people chose by the cheirotonia (lifting up of hands) their spiritual pastor; and the rulers of the Church, whether apostles or others, appointed that person to his office by the cheirothesia, or imposition of hands; and perhaps each of these was thought to be equally necessary: the Church agreeing in the election of the person; and the rulers of the Church appointing, by imposition of hands, the person thus elected. See the note on Acts 6:6.

*And had I prayed with fasting*— This was to implore God's special assistance; as they well knew that, without his influence, even their appointment could avail nothing.

*Commended them to the Lord*— To his especial care and protection.

**Verse 24.** *Passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.*— See the note on Acts 13:13.

**Verse 25.** *They went down into Attalia*— This was a sea-port town in Pamphylia. Thus we find the apostles traveled from Derbe to Lystra; from Lystra to Iconium; from Iconium to Antioch of Pisidia; from Antioch to Perga in Pamphylia; and from Perga to Attalia; and it appears that they traveled over three provinces of Asia Minor, Pamphylia, Lycaonia, and Pisidia. See Calmet, and see the map.

**Verse 26.** *And thence sailed to Antioch*— This was Antioch in Syria; and to reach which, by sea, they were obliged to coast a part of the Mediterranean Sea, steering between Cyprus and Cilicia; though they might have gone the whole journey by land.

*Whence they had been recommended-for the work which they fulfilled.*— The reader will recollect that it was from this Antioch they had been sent to preach the Gospel to the heathen in Asia Minor: see Acts 13:1, 2; and that they fulfilled that work: see in the same chapter, Acts 13:48; and the circumstantial account of their travels and preaching given in this chapter.

**Verse 27.** *Had gathered the Church together*— The Church by which they had been sent on this very important and successful mission.

*They rehearsed all that God had done with them*— Not what they had done themselves; but what GOD made them the instruments of working.

*And how he had opened the door of faith*— How God by his providence and grace had made a way for preaching Christ crucified among the heathen; and how the heathen had received that Gospel which, through faith in Christ Jesus, was able to save their souls.

**Verse 28.** *And there they abode long time*— How long the apostles tarried here we cannot tell; but we hear no more of them till the council of Jerusalem, mentioned in the following chapter, which is generally supposed to have been held in the year 51 of our Lord; and, if the transactions of this chapter took place in A.D. 46, as chronologers think, then there are five whole years of St. Paul's ministry, and that of other apostles, which St. Luke passes by in perfect silence. It is very likely that all this time Paul and Barnabas were employed in extending the work of God through the different provinces contiguous to Antioch; for St. Paul himself tells us that he preached the Gospel so far as Illyria, Romans 15:19, on the side of the Adriatic Gulf: see its situation on the map. Many of the tribulations and perils through which the Apostle Paul passed are not mentioned by St. Luke, particularly those of which he himself speaks, 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. He had been five times scourged by the Jews; thrice beaten by the Romans; thrice shipwrecked; a whole night and day in the deep, probably saving his life upon a plank; besides frequent journeyings, and perils from his countrymen, from the heathen, from robbers, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren, etc., etc. Of none of these have we any circumstantial account. Probably most of these happened in the five years which elapsed between the apostles' return to Antioch, and the council of Jerusalem.

IN reading the Acts of the Apostles we may have often occasion to remark that in preaching the Gospel they carefully considered the different circumstances of the Jews and the Gentiles, and suited their address accordingly. When speaking to the former, of the necessity of crediting the Gospel, because without it they could not be saved, they took care to support all their assertions by passages drawn from the LAW and the PROPHETS, as every Jew considered those books to be of Divine authority, and from their decision there was no appeal. But, in addressing the Gentiles, who had no revelation, they drew the proof of their doctrine from the visible creation; and demonstrated, by plain reasoning, the absurdity of their idolatrous worship, and called them off from those

vanities to the worship of the living and true God, who made and governs all things, and who gave them such proofs of his being, wisdom, and goodness, in the provision made for their comfort and support, that they had only to reflect on the subject in order to be convinced of its truth. And while, in consequence, they saw the absurdity of their own system, they would at once discover the reasonableness of that religion which was now offered to them, in the name and on the authority of that God who had fed and preserved them all their life long, and girded them when they knew him not. The Gentiles felt the force of these reasonings, yielded to the truth, and became steady followers of Christ crucified; while the Jews, with all their light and advantages, hardened their hearts against it, though they had no other arguments than what contradiction and blasphemy could provide! Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before them. Do not many, even in the present day, copy their example, revile the truth, take up with the shadow instead of the substance, and rest just as much in the letter of Christianity, as ever the Jews did in the letter of the law? This is a deplorable fact which cannot be successfully controverted.

2. We have already had occasion to note five years of a chasm in the apostolic history. God himself does not choose to have all the labors and sufferings of his servants recorded. Their recompense is in heaven; and it is enough that God knows their work, who alone can reward it. And yet every faithful servant of God will feel that the reward is all of grace, and not of debt; for the amount of their good is just the sum of what God has condescended to do by them. How studious are men to record the smallest transactions of their lives, while much of the life and labors of Jesus Christ and his apostles are written in the sand, and no longer legible to man; or written before the throne, where they are seen only by God and his angels. In many cases, the silence of Scripture is not less instructive than its most pointed communications.

3. We cannot consider the effect produced on the minds of the people of Lystra, without being surprised that a single miracle, wrought instrumentally by men, should excite so much attention and reverence, and that we should be unmoved by the myriads wrought by the immediate hand of GOD.



4. How difficult it is to get men brought to worship God, though they have the highest reasons and most powerful motives for it; and yet how ready are they to offer an incense to man that is due only to God himself! We applaud the apostles for rejecting with horror the sacrifices offered to them: common sense must have taught them this lesson, even independently of their piety. Let us beware that we take not that praise to ourselves which belongs to our Maker. Gross flattery is generally rejected, because a man cannot receive it without being rendered ridiculous; but who rejects even inordinate praise, if it be delicately and artfully prepared!

## CHAPTER 15.

*Certain teachers from Judea insist on the necessity of the converted Gentiles being circumcised, 1. Paul and Barnabas are sent to Jerusalem to consult the apostles on this subject, 2. They come to Jerusalem, and inform the apostles of the conversion of the Gentiles; and of the trouble which certain Pharisees had occasioned concerning circumcision, 3-5. The apostles having assembled to consider the question, Peter delivers his opinion, 6-11. Barnabas and Paul relate their success among the Gentiles, 12. James delivers his judgment, 13-21. The apostles and elders agree to what he proposes, and send Judas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas to the converted Gentiles, 22; and send an epistle containing their decree to the Churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, 23-29. Paul and his company return, and read the epistle to the brethren at Antioch, which produces great joy; and Judas and Silas preach to them, 30-32. Judas returns to Jerusalem, but Silas continues with Paul and Barnabas, teaching and preaching, 33-35. Paul proposes to Barnabas to visit the Churches where they had preached; and, on the latter determining to take John Mark with them, Paul refuses, 36-38. They disagree; and Barnabas, taking John Mark, sails to Cyprus, 39. And Paul, taking Silas, goes through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches, 40, 41.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15.

**Verse 1.** *Except ye be circumcised*, etc.— The persons who taught this doctrine appear to have been converts to Christianity; but, supposing that the Christian religion was intended to perfect the Mosaic, and not to supersede it, they insisted on the necessity of circumcision, because, by that, a man was made debtor to the whole law, to observe all its rites and ceremonies. This question produced great disturbance in the apostolic Church; and, notwithstanding the decree mentioned in this chapter, the apostles were frequently obliged to interpose their authority in order to settle it; and we find a whole Church, that at Galatia, drawn aside from the simplicity of the Christian faith by the subtilty of Judaizing teachers

among themselves, who insisted on the necessity of the converted Gentiles being circumcised.

***Ye cannot be saved.***— Ye can neither enjoy God's blessing in time, nor his glory in eternity. Such an assertion as this, from any reputable authority, must necessarily shake the confidence of young converts.

**Verse 2. *No small dissension and disputation***— Paul and Barnabas were fully satisfied that God did not design to bring the converted Gentiles under the yoke of circumcision: they knew that Jesus Christ was the end of the law for righteousness (justification) to every one that believed, and therefore they opposed the Judaizing teachers. This was one of the first controversies in the Christian Church; but, though the difference of sentiment was considerable, it led to no breach of Christian charity nor fellowship among themselves.

***They determined that Paul,*** etc.— This verse is read very differently in the Codex Bezae: *γενομενης δε εκτασεως και ζητησεως ουκ ιλιγης τω παυλω και τω βαρναβα συν αυτοις. ελεγεν γαρ ο παυλος μενειν ουτως, καθες επιστευσαν, διισχυριζομενος. οιδε εληλυθοτες απο ιερουσαλημ, παρηγγειλαν αυτοις, τω παυλω και βαρναβα και τισιν αλλοις, αναβαινειν προς τους αποστολους και πρεσβυτερους εις ιερουσαλημ, οπως κριθωσιν επ' αυτοις (αυτων) περι του ζητηματος τουτου.* But when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, Paul said, with strong assurance, that they should remain so as they had believed. But those who came from Jerusalem charged Paul and Barnabas and certain others to go up to the apostles and elders to Jerusalem, that a determination might be made by them concerning this question.

***And certain other of them***— If this be the journey to which St. Paul alludes, Galatians 2:1-5, then he had Titus with him; and how many elders went from the Church of Antioch we cannot tell. This journey was 14 years after Paul's conversion, and was undertaken by express revelation, as he informs us, Galatians 2:2, which revelation appears to have been given to certain persons in the Church of Antioch, as we learn from this verse, and not to Paul and Barnabas themselves.

**Verse 3. *Being brought on their way by the Church***— That is; the members of the Church provided them with all necessaries for their journey; for it does not appear that they had any property of their own.

***Declaring the conversion of the Gentiles***— Much stress is laid on this: it was a miracle of God's mercy that the Gentiles should be received into the Church of God; and they had now the fullest proof that the thing was likely to become general, by the conversion of Cornelius, the conversion of the people of Antioch, of Cyprus, Pisidia, Pamphylia, Lycaonia, etc., etc.

**Verse 4. *They were received of the Church***— The whole body of Christian believers.

***The apostles***— Either the whole or part of the twelve; though we read of none but John, Peter, and James. See Galatians 2:9.

***And elders***— Those who were officers in the Church, under the apostles.

***They declared***— To this council they gave a succinct account of the great work which God had wrought by them among the Gentiles. This was St. Paul's third journey to Jerusalem after his conversion. See an account of his first journey, Acts 9:26, and of his second in Acts 11:30.

**Verse 5. *But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees***— This verse appears to be part of the declaration made by Paul and Barnabas to this council: for, having stated how God blessed their ministry among the Gentiles, they proceed to declare how all the good work was likely to be destroyed by certain Pharisees, who, having received the Christian faith, came down to Antioch, and began to teach the necessity of circumcision, etc., and thus filled the minds of the young converted Gentiles with doubtful disputations. See the margin.

**Verse 6. *The apostles and elders came together***— This was the first council ever held in the Christian Church; and we find that it was composed of the apostles and elders simply.

**Verse 7. *When there had been much disputing***— By those of the sect of the believing Pharisees; for they strongly contended for circumcision, and at the head of these, tradition tells us, was Cerinthus, a name famous in the primitive Church, as one who labored to unite the law and the Gospel, and to make the salvation promised by the latter dependent on the

performance of the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the former. Though the apostles and elders were under the inspiration of the Almighty, and could by this inspiration have immediately determined the question, yet it was highly necessary that the objecting party should be permitted to come forward and allege their reasons for the doctrines they preached, and that these reasons should be fairly met by argument, and the thing proved to be useless in itself, inexpedient in the present case, and unsupported by any express authority from God, and serving no purpose to the Gentiles, who in their uncircumcised state, by believing in Christ Jesus, had been made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

***Peter rose up, and said***— This was after the matters in dispute had been fully debated; and now the apostles, like judges, after hearing counsel on both sides, proceed to give judgment on the case.

***A good while ago***— **αφ' ημερων αρχαιων**, From the days of old: a phrase which simply signifies some years ago; and, if he here refers to the conversion of Cornelius, (see Acts 10:1-48,) he must mean about ten years before this time; but it is more likely that he refers to that time when Christ gave him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that he might open the door of faith to the Gentiles.

***God made choice among us***— That is, he chose me to be the first apostle of the Gentiles.

**Verse 8. *And God which knoweth the hearts***— **ο καρδιογνωστης θεος**. We had this epithet of the Divine Being once before; see Acts 1:24, and the note there: it occurs no where else in the New Testament.

***Bare them witness***— Considered them as proper or fit to receive the Gospel of Christ. It is properly remarked by learned men, that **μαρτυρειν τινι**, to bear witness to any person, signifies to approve, to testify in behalf of. Here it signifies that, as God evidently sent the Gospel to the Gentiles, and, by the preaching of it, conveyed the Holy Spirit to them who believed, and as he can make no improper judgment of any who knows all hearts and their secrets, therefore what he had done was right: he saw that it was time for them to receive the Gospel; and he saw that they might be safely trusted with this heavenly deposit; and the experience of eighteen hundred years has justified the conduct of God.

**Verse 9. *Put no difference between us and them***— Giving them the Holy Spirit, though uncircumcised, just as he had given it to us who were circumcised: an evident proof that, in the judgment of God, circumcision was no preparation to receive the Gospel of Christ. And as the purification of the heart by the Holy Spirit was the grand object of the religion of God, and that alone by which the soul could be prepared for a blessed immortality, and the Gentiles had received that without circumcision, consequently, the shadow could not be considered of any worth, now the substance was communicated.

**Verse 10. *Now therefore why tempt ye God***— A God, by giving the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles, evidently shows he does not design them to be circumcised, in order to become debtors to the law, to fulfill all its precepts, etc., why will ye provoke him to displeasure by doing what he evidently designs shall not be done?

***A yoke-which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?***— This does not refer to the moral law-that was of eternal obligation-but to the ritual law, which, through the multitude of its sacrifices, ordinances, etc., was exceedingly burthensome to the Jewish people. And had not God, by an especial providence, rendered both their fields and their flocks very fruitful, they could not possibly have borne so painful a ritual.

There is a curious story in Midrash Shochar, told in Yalkut Simeoni, part i. fol. 229, where Korah is represented as showing the oppressive nature of the law, and avarice of its priests, in justification of his rebellion. "There was," said he, "a widow in our neighbourhood who had two orphan children: she had one field; and, when she began to plough it, one came and said, Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. when she went to sow it, he said, Thou shalt not sow thy field with divers seeds. When she began to reap, and to gather the sheaves together, he said, Leave a handful and the corners of the field for the poor. When she prepared to thresh it, he said, Give me the wave-offering, and the first and second tithes. She did as she was commanded, and then went and sold her field, and bought two ewes, that she might clothe herself and family with the wool, and get profit by the lambs. When they brought forth their lambs, Aaron came and said, Give me the

firstlings, for the holy blessed God hath said, All the first born, whatsoever openeth the womb, shall be thine. She yielded to his demands, and gave him two lambs. When shearing time came, he said, Give me the first fruits of the wool. When the widow had done this, she said, I cannot stand before this man; I will kill my sheep and eat them. When she had killed the sheep, Aaron came and said, Give me the shoulder, and the jaws, and the ventricle. The widow said, Though I have killed my sheep, I am not delivered from this man; I therefore consecrate the whole to God. Then Aaron said, ALL belongs to me, for the holy blessed God hath said, Every thing that is consecrated in Israel shall be his, i.e. the priest's. He therefore took the whole carcasses, and marched off, leaving the widow and her orphan daughters over whelmed with affliction." This is a terrible picture of the requisitions of the Mosaic ritual; and, though exaggerated, it contains so many true features that it may well be said, This is a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. See Schoettgen. In the same vexatious way may the tithes of the national Church in this country be exacted, and in this very way is the exaction frequently exercised. It is high time that these abuses should be corrected.

**Verse 11. *Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved***—

This seems to be an answer to an objection, "Has not God designed to save us, the Jews, by an observance of the law; and them, the Gentiles, by the faith of the Gospel?" No: for we Jews can be saved no other way than through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; and this is the way in which the Gentiles in question have been saved. There is but one way of salvation for Jews and Gentiles, the grace, mercy, or favor coming by and through the Lord Jesus, the Christ; this is now fully opened to the Gentiles; and we believe we shall be saved in the same way.

**Verse 12. *All the multitude kept silence***— The strong facts stated by St. Peter could not be controverted. His speech may be thus analyzed: 1. Circumcision is a sign of the purification of the heart. 2. That purification can only be effected by the Holy Ghost. 3. This Holy Spirit was hitherto supposed to be the portion of those only who had received circumcision. 4. But the Gentiles, who were never circumcised, nor kept any part of the law of Moses, have had their hearts purified by faith in Christ Jesus. 5. As

God, therefore, has given them the thing signified, he evidently does not intend that the sign should be administered. 6. Should we impose this burthensome rite, we should most evidently be provoking God, who plainly shows us that he intends no more to save in this way. 7. Therefore it is evident that both Jews and Gentiles are to be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

***Gave audience to Barnabas and Paul***— These apostles came forward next, to corroborate what Peter had said, by showing the miracles and wonders which God had by them wrought among the Gentiles. Peter stated facts: Paul and Barnabas confirmed the statement.

**Verse 13. *James answered***— He was evidently president of the council, and is generally called bishop of Jerusalem. The rest either argued on the subject, or gave their opinion; James alone pronounced the definitive sentence. Had Peter been prince and head of the apostles, and of the Church, he would have appeared here in the character of judge, not of mere counsellor or disputant. Thy popish writers say that “James presided because the council was held in his own church.” These men forget that there was not then what they term a Church on the face of the earth. The Church, or assembly of believers, then met in private houses; for there was no building for the exclusive purpose of Christian worship then, nor till long after. These writers also forget that the pope pretends to be the head of the catholic or universal Church; and, consequently, no man can preside where he is present, but himself. Peter did not preside here; and this was the first ecclesiastical council, and now, if ever, he should have assumed his character of prince and chief; but he did not; nor did any of the other apostles invite him to it, which they would have done had they thought that Jesus Christ constituted him head of the Church. From this very circumstance there is the most demonstrative evidence that Peter was no pope, and that the right of his pretended successor is a nonentity.

**Verse 14. *Simeon hath declared***— It is remarkable that James does not give him even the title which he received from our Lord at the time in which he is supposed to have been made head of the Church, and vicar of Christ upon earth; so that, it is evident, James did not understand our Lord as giving Peter any such pre-eminence; and, therefore, he does not even call him Peter, but simply Simeon. It is truly surprising that such a vast



number of important pretensions should rest on such slight foundations! If tradition, no matter how interrupted or precarious, did not lend its support, feeble as that necessarily must be, the cause tried by plain Scripture would fall to the ground.

*To take out of them a people for his name.*— To form among the Gentiles, as he had among the Jews, a people called by his name and devoted to his honor.

**Verse 15.** *And to this agree the words of the prophets*— Peter had asserted the fact of the conversion of the Gentiles; and James shows that that fact was the fulfillment of declarations made by the prophets.

**Verse 16.** *After this I will return, and will build again*, etc.— These two verses, 16th and 17th, are quoted from Amos 9:11, 12, nearly as they now stand in the best editions of the Septuagint, and evidently taken from that version, which differs considerably from the Hebrew text. As St. James quoted them as a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles into the Church of God, it is evident the Jews must have understood them in that sense, otherwise they would have immediately disputed his application of them to the subject in question, and have rejected his conclusion by denying the premises. But that the words were thus understood by the ancient Jews, we have their own testimony. In Sanhedr. fol. 69, we have these remarkable words: “Rabbi Nachman said to Rabbi Isaac, ‘Whence art thou taught when Bar Naphli will come?’ He saith unto him, ‘Who is this Bar Naphli?’ The other replied, ‘He is the Messiah.’ ‘Dost thou then call the Messiah Bar Naphli?’ ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘for it is written, In that day I will build again the tabernacle of David, הנפלת HANOPHELETH, which is falling down.’” This is evidently a quotation from Amos 9:11, and a proof that the Jews understood it to be a prophecy concerning the Messiah. See Lightfoot.

**Verse 17.** *That the residue of men might seek*— Instead of this, the Hebrew has, That they may possess the remnant of Edom. Now it is evident that, in the copy from which the Seventy translated, they found ידרשו yidreshu, they might seek, instead of ירשו yiresu, they may possess, where the whole difference between the two words is the change of the י yod for a ד dalet, which might be easily done; and they found

אָדָם adam, man, or men, instead of אֱדוּמָאִים Edom, the Idumeans, which differs from the other only by the insertion of וּ vau between the two last letters. None of the MSS. collated by Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi confirm these readings, in which the Septuagint, Arabic, and St. James agree. It shows, however, that even in Jerusalem, and in the early part of the apostolic age, the Septuagint version was quoted in preference to the Hebrew text; or, what is tantamount, was quoted in cases where we would have thought the Hebrew text should have been preferred, because better understood. But God was evidently preparing the way of the Gospel by bringing this venerable version into general credit and use; which was to be the means of conveying the truths of Christianity to the whole Gentile world. How precious should this august and most important version be to every Christian, and especially to every Christian minister! A version, without which no man ever did or ever can critically understand the New Testament. And I may add that, without the assistance afforded by this version, there never could have been a correct translation of the Hebrew text, since that language ceased to be vernacular, into any language. Without it, even St. Jerome could have done little in translating the Old Testament into Latin; and how much all the modern versions owe to St. Jerome's Vulgate, which owes so much to the Septuagint, most Biblical scholars know.

**Verse 18. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning***— As if he had said, This is not a new counsel of God: he had purposed, from the time he called the Israelites, to make the Gentiles partakers of the same grace and mercy; and ultimately to destroy those rites and ceremonies which separated them from each other. He therefore has sent the Gospel of his Son, proclaiming equally peace to him that is afar off, the Gentiles, and to him that is nigh, the Jews.

The whole of this verse is very dubious: the principal part of it is omitted by the most ancient MSS., and Griesbach has left *γνωστα ἀπ' αἰῶνος* doubtful, and has thrown *ἐστὶ τῷ θεῷ πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ* out of the text. Of the former clause, Professor White, in his *Crisews*, says, “forsitan delenda,” “probably these words should be blotted out.” And of the latter clause he says, “certissime delenda,” “most assuredly these should be blotted out.” Supposing the whole to be genuine, critics have labored to find out the sense. Some very learned men, and particularly Schleusner,

contend that the word **γνωστα**, from **γνωσκειν**, to know, should be understood here in the same sense in which **יָדָא** yada is in many parts of the Old Testament, which not only signifies to know, but to approve, love, etc. They therefore would translate the passage thus: All the works of God are ever dear unto him. And, if so, consequently we might naturally expect him to be merciful to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews; and the evidence now afforded of the conversion of the Gentiles is an additional proof that all God's works are equally dear to him.

**Verse 19. *Wherefore my sentence is***— **διο εγω κρινω**, Wherefore I judge. There is an authority here that does not appear in the speech of St. Peter; and this authority was felt and bowed to by all the council; and the decree proposed by St. James adopted.

**Verse 20. *But that we write unto them***— Four things are prohibited in this decree: 1. POLLUTIONS of idols; 2. fornication; 3. things strangled; 4. blood. By the first, POLLUTIONS of IDOLS, or, as it is in Acts 15:25, meats offered to idols, not only all idolatry was forbidden, but eating things offered in sacrifice to idols, knowing that they were thus offered, and joining with idolaters in their sacred feasts, which were always an incentive either to idolatry itself, or to the impure acts generally attendant on such festivals.

By the second, FORNICATION, all uncleanness of every kind was prohibited; for **πορνεια** not only means fornication, but adultery, incestuous mixtures, and especially the prostitution which was so common at the idol temples, viz. in Cyprus, at the worship of Venus; and the shocking disorders exhibited in the Bacchanalia, Lupercalia, and several others.

By the third, THINGS STRANGLED, we are to understand the flesh of those animals which were strangled for the purpose of keeping the blood in the body, as such animals were esteemed a greater delicacy.

By the fourth, BLOOD, we are to understand, not only the thing itself, for the reasons which I have assigned in the note on Genesis 9:4, and for others detailed at the end of this chapter; but also all cruelty, manslaughter, murder, etc., as some of the ancient fathers have understood it.

Instead of **του αιματος**, blood, some have conjectured that we should read **χοιρειας**, swine's flesh; for they cannot see, first, that there can be

any harm in eating of blood; and, secondly, that, as the other three things neither have nor can have any moral evil in them, it would seem strange that they should be coupled with a thing which, on all hands, is confessed to have much moral turpitude. Answers to such trifling objections will be found at the end of the chapter. It is only necessary to add that this **χοιρειας**, which is the critical emendation of Dr. Bentley, is not supported by one MS. or version in existence.

At the close of this verse, the Codex Bezae, and several others, add a fifth thing, And not to do to others what they would not have done to themselves. Though this is a very ancient reading, it does not appear to be genuine.

**Verse 21. *Moses of old time hath in every city***— The sense of this verse seems to be this: As it was necessary to write to the Gentiles what was strictly necessary to be observed by them, relative to these points, it was not so to the converted Jews; for they had Moses, that is, the law, preached to them, **κατα πολιν**, in the city, that is, Antioch; and, by the reading of the law in the synagogues every Sabbath day, they were kept in remembrance of those institutions which the Gentiles, who had not the law, could not know. Therefore, James thought that a letter to the converted Gentiles would be sufficient, as the converted Jews had already ample instruction on these points.

**Verse 22. *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole Church***— James determined what ought to be done; and the whole assembly resolved how that should be done.

***Chosen men of their own company***— Paul and Barnabas were to return: they could have witnessed to the Church at Antioch what was done at the council at Jerusalem; but as it was possible that their testimony might be suspected, from the part they had already taken in this question at Antioch, it was necessary that a deputation from the council should accompany them. Accordingly Judas and Silas are sent to corroborate by their oral testimony what was contained in the letters sent from the council.

**Verse 23. *Send greeting unto the brethren-of the Gentiles***— There was no occasion to send such a letter to the brethren which were of the Jews,

because that law which had been so long read in their synagogues taught them all those things; and therefore the epistle is sent exclusively to the Gentiles. The word greeting is in the original *χαίρειν*, to be well, to be safe; a very usual form in Greek epistles, the word *ευχομαι* being understood, I wish thee to be well.

**Verse 24. *Certain which went out from us***— So the persons who produced these doubtful disputations at Antioch, etc., had gone out from the apostles at Jerusalem, and were of that Church: persons zealous for the law, and yet, strange to tell, so conscientiously attached to the Gospel that they risked their personal safety by professing it.

***To whom we gave no such commandment***— As, therefore, they went out from that Church, they should have taught nothing which was not owned and taught by it; much less should they have taught in opposition to it.

**Verse 26. *Men that have hazarded their lives***— This was a high character of Paul and Barnabas: they had already suffered much in the cause of Christ, and exposed their lives to the most imminent danger, and were intent on the same work, notwithstanding the increasing dangers in the way.

**Verse 27. *Judas and Silas -shall-tell you the same things***— These were proofs that the testimony of Paul and Barnabas was true; and that the letter was not forged, as they could witness the same things which the letter contained.

**Verse 28. *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us***— The whole council had met under his direction; had consulted under his influence; and gave forth their decree from his especial inspiration.

***Necessary things***— They were necessary, howsoever burthensome they might appear; and necessary, not only for the time, place, or occasion; but for all times, all places, and all occasions. See this proved in the observations at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 29. *Ye shall do well.***— But, if they did not keep themselves from these things, they would do ill; that is, they would sin against God, whose Spirit had commanded them to keep from these things. And who can do

any of these forbidden things, and keep either a guiltless or a tender conscience?

***Fare-well.***— An old English form of expressing good wishes and good will. It is compounded of (Anglo-Saxon) to go, and (Anglo-Saxon), much, well, very much. Go well, go prosperously!—tantamount with good speed! may you succeed well! may God direct you! Like to that other form of sound words, God be with you! corrupted now into good by to ye! And of the same meaning with adieu! a Dieu, to God; that is, I commend you to God. All these terms savour not only of good will, or benevolence, but also of piety. Our pious ancestors believed that nothing was safe, nothing protected, nothing prosperous, over which the shield of God was not extended; and, therefore, in their familiar good wishes, they gave each other to God. The Greek word *ερρωσθε*, *errhosthe*, here used, from *ρωννυμι*, to strengthen, make strong, has nearly the same signification: be strong, courageous, active, be in health, and be prosperous! What a pity that such benevolent and pious wishes should degenerate into cool formalities, or unmeaning compliments!

**Verse 31. *They rejoiced for the consolation.***— It was not a matter of small moment to have a question on which such stress was laid decided by an apostolic council, over which the Spirit of God presided.

**Verse 32. *Judas and Silas, being prophets***— That is, being teachers in the Church. This signification of the word prophet we have often already seen. See the notes on Acts 11:27; 13:1.

***Exhorted the brethren***— To abide steadily attached to God, and to each other, in peace, love, and unity.

***And confirmed them.***— In the blessed truths they had already received.

**Verse 33. *They were let go***— That is, both had liberty to depart; but Silas chose to stay a little longer with the brethren.

**Verse 34. *Notwithstanding it pleased Silas***, etc.— This whole verse is wanting in ABEG, a great number besides, with the Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Slavonic, Vulgate, and some of the fathers. It does not appear to have been originally in the text.

**Verse 36. *Let us go-and visit our brethren in every city***— This heavenly man projected a journey to Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Iconiam, Lystra, Derbe, Antioch in Pisidia, and elsewhere; for in all these places he had preached and founded Churches in the preceding year. He saw it was necessary to water the seed he had planted; for these were young converts, surrounded with impiety, opposition, and superstition, and had few advantages among themselves.

**Verse 37. *Barnabas determined to take with them John***— John Mark was his sister's son; and natural affection might have led him to the partiality here mentioned.

**Verse 38. *But Paul thought not good to take him with them***— On this subject, see the note on Acts 13:13.

**Verse 39. *The contention was so sharp between them***— For all this sentence, there is only in the Greek text *εγενετο ουν παροξυσμος*; there was therefore a paroxysm, an incitement, a stirring up, from *παροξυνω*, compounded of *παρα*, intensive, and *οξυνω*, to whet, or sharpen: there was a sharp contention. But does this imply anger or ill-will on either side? Certainly not. Here, these two apostles differed, and were strenuous, each in support of the part he had adopted. "Paul," as an ancient Greek commentator has it, "being influenced only with the love of righteousness; Barnabas being actuated by love to his relative." John Mark had been tried in trying circumstances, and he failed; Paul, therefore, would not trust him again. The affection of Barnabas led him to hope the best, and was therefore desirous to give him another trial. Barnabas would not give up: Paul would not agree. They therefore agreed to depart from each other, and take different parts of the work: each had an attendant and companion at hand; so Barnabas took John Mark, and sailed to Cyprus: Paul took Silas, and went into Syria. John Mark proved faithful to his uncle Barnabas; and Silas proved faithful to his master Paul. To all human appearance it was best that they separated; as the Churches were more speedily visited, and the work of God more widely and more rapidly spread. And why is it that most men attach blame to this difference between Paul and Barnabas? And why is it that this is brought in as a proof of the sinful imperfection of these holy apostles? Because those who thus treat the subject can never differ with another without feeling wrong tempers; and then, as destitute

of good breeding as they are of humility, they attribute to others the angry, proud, and wrathful dispositions which they feel in themselves; and, because they cannot be angry and sin not, they suppose that even apostles themselves cannot. Thus, in fact, we are always bringing our own moral or immoral qualifications to be a standard, by which we are to judge of the characters and moral feelings of men who were actuated by zeal for God's glory, brotherly kindness, and charity. Should any man say there was sin in this contention between Paul and Barnabas, I answer, there is no evidence of this in the text. Should he say, the word **παροξυσμος**, paroxysm, denotes this, I answer, it does not. And the verb **παροξυνομαι** is often used in a good sense. So Isocrates ad Demosth. cap. xx. **μαλιστα δ' αν παροξυνθειης ορεχθηναι των καλων εργαων**. "But thou wilt be the more stirred up to the love of good works." And such persons forget that this is the very form used by the apostle himself, Hebrews 10:24: **και κατανοωμεν αλληλους εις παροξυσμον αγαπης και καλων εργαων** which, these objectors would be highly displeased with me, were I to translate, Let us consider one another to an angry contention of love and good works. From these examples, it appears that the word is used to signify incitement of any kind; and, if taken in a medical sense, to express the burning fit of an ague: it is also taken to express a strong excitement to the love of God and man, and to the fruits by which such love can be best proved; and, in the case before us, there was certainly nothing contrary to this pure principle in either of those heavenly men. See also Kypke on Hebrews 10:24.

**Verse 40. *Being recommended-unto the grace of God.***— Much stress has been laid upon this, to show that Barnabas was in the wrong, and Paul in the right, because "the brethren recommended Paul and Silas to the grace of God; but they did not recommend Barnabas and John Mark: this proves that the Church condemned the conduct of Barnabas, but approved that of Paul." Now, there is no proof that the Church did not recommend Barnabas to the grace of God, as well as Paul; but, as St. Luke had for the present dropped the story of Barnabas, and was now going on with that of Paul and Silas, he begins it at this point, viz. his being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God; and then goes on to tell of his progress in Syria, Derbe, Lystra, etc., etc. See the next chapter. And with this verse



should the following chapter begin; and this is the division followed by the most correct copies of the Greek text.

**Verse 41. *Confirming the Churches.***— This was the object of his journey: they were young converts, and had need of establishment; and there is no doubt that, by showing them the decision made at the late council of Jerusalem, their faith was greatly strengthened, their hope confirmed, and their love increased. It was this consideration, no doubt, that led some ancient MSS. and some versions to add here, They delivered them the decrees of the apostles and elders to keep; which clause certainly was not an original part of the text, but seems to have been borrowed from the fourth verse of the following chapter. Some have thought that the fourth and fifth verses of the next chapter really belong to this place; or that the first, second, and third verses of it should be read in a parenthesis; but of this there does not appear to be any particular necessity.

## CHAPTER 16.

*Paul, coming to Derbe and Lystra, meets with Timothy, the son of a Jewess by a Greek father, whom he circumcises and takes with him into his work, 1-3. As they pass through the different cities, they deliver the apostles' decrees to the Churches; and they are established in the faith, and daily increase in numbers, 4, 5. They travel through Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and to Troas, 6-8. Where Paul has a vision, relative to his preaching in Macedonia, 9, 10. Leaving Troas, he sails to Samothracia and Neapolis, and comes to Philippi in Macedonia, 11, 12. Lydia, a seller of purple, receives the apostles teaching; and she and her family are baptized, 13-16. A young woman, with a spirit of divination, dispossessed by St. Paul, 16-18. Her masters, finding their gain by her soothsaying gone, make an attack upon Paul and Silas, drag them before the magistrates, who command them to be beaten, thrust into the closest prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, 19-24. Paul and Silas singing praises at midnight, the prison doors are miraculously opened, and all the bonds of the prisoners loosed, 25, 26. The keeper being alarmed, supposing that the prisoners were fled, is about to kill himself, but is prevented by Paul, 27-28. He inquires the way of salvation, believes, and he and his whole family are baptized, 29-34. The next morning the magistrates order the apostles to be dismissed, 35, 36. Paul pleads his privilege as a Roman, and accuses the magistrates of injustice, who, being alarmed, come themselves to the prison, deliver them, and beg them to depart from the city, 37-39. They leave the prison, enter into the house of Lydia, comfort the brethren, and depart, 40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16.

**Verse 1.** *A certain disciple*— Bishop Pearce would read the latter part of this verse and the beginning of the next thus—A certain disciple named Timotheus, (the son of a certain Jewish woman that believed, but of a father who was a Greek,) who was well reported of by the brethren, etc.

This Timothy was the same person to whom St. Paul wrote those two noble epistles which are still extant. His mother's name was Eunice, as we learn from 2 Timothy 1:5. What his father's name was we know not; he was either a mere heathen, or, at most, only a proselyte of the gate, who never submitted to circumcision: had he submitted to this rite, he would, no doubt, have circumcised his son; but the son being without it is a proof that the father was so too. Some MSS. state that Timothy's mother was now a widow; but this does not appear to be well founded.

**Verse 2. *Which was well reported of***— These words are spoken of Timothy, and not of his father. At this time Timothy must have been very young; for, several years after, when appointed to superintend the Church at Crete, he appears to have been then so young that there was a danger of its operating to the prejudice of his ministry: 1 Timothy 4:12, Let no man despise thy youth. He had a very early religious education from his godly mother Eunice, and his not less pious grandmother Lois; and, from his religious instructions, was well prepared for the work to which God now called him.

**Verse 3. *Took and circumcised him***— For this simple reason, that the Jews would neither have heard him preach, nor would have any connection with him, had he been otherwise. Besides, St. Paul himself could have had no access to the Jews in any place, had they known that he associated with a person who was uncircumcised: they would have considered both to be unclean. The circumcision of Timothy was a merely prudential regulation; one rendered imperiously necessary by the circumstances in which they were then placed; and, as it was done merely in reference to this, Timothy was laid under no necessity to observe the Mosaic ritual, nor could it prejudice his spiritual state, because he did not do it in order to seek justification by the law, for this he had before, through the faith of Christ. In Galatians 2:3-5, we read that Paul refuses to circumcise Titus, who was a Greek, and his parents Gentiles, notwithstanding the entreaties of some zealous Judaizing Christians, as their object was to bring him under the yoke of the law: here, the case was widely different, and the necessity of the measure indisputable.

**Verse 4. *They delivered them the decrees for to keep***— τα δογματα, τα κεκριμενα υπο των αποστολων. Bishop Pearce contends that τα δογματα, the decrees, is a gloss which was not in the text originally; and that the τα κεκριμενα, the judgments or determinations of the apostles, was all that was originally written here. He supports his opinion by a reference to the word κρινω, I judge, used by James, Acts 15:19, whence the whole decision, as it referred-1. to the inexpediency of circumcising the Gentiles; and, 2. to the necessity of observing the four precepts laid down, was called τα κεκριμενα, the things that were judged, or decided on; the judgments of the apostolic council. Instead of γεγραμμενα, the Syrian has a word that answers to γεγραμμενα, the decrees that were written. The word δογμα, from δοκειω, to think proper, determine, decree, signifies an ordinance or decree, properly and deliberately made, relative to any important point, and which, in reference to that point, has the force of law. Our term dogma, which we often abuse, is the Greek word in English letters.

**Verse 5. *And so were the Churches established***— The disputations at Antioch, relative to circumcision, had no doubt spread far and wide among other Churches, and unhinged many. The decrees of the apostles came in good time, and prevented farther mischief: the people, saved from uncertainty, became established in the faith; and the Church had a daily accession of converted souls.

**Verse 6. *Were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.***— The Asia mentioned here could not be Asia Minor in general, for Galatia, Phrygia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, and Pamphylia, were provinces of it, and in these the apostles preached; but it was what was called Proconsular Asia, which included only Ionia, AEolia, and Lydia. The apostles were not suffered to visit these places at this time; but they afterwards went thither, and preached the Gospel with success; for it was in this Proconsular Asia that the seven Churches were situated. God chose to send his servants to another place, where he saw that the word would be affectionately received; and probably those in Proconsular Asia were not, as yet, sufficiently prepared to receive and profit by it.

**Verse 7. *After they were come to Mysia***— They passed through Phrygia into Mysia, which lay between Bithynia on the north, Phrygia on the east, AEolia on the south, and the Mediterranean on the west.

***But the Spirit suffered them not***— God saw that that was not the most proper time to preach the word at Bithynia; as he willed them to go immediately to Macedonia, the people there being ripe for the word of life. Instead of **το πνευμα**, the Spirit merely, **το πνευμα ιησου**, the Spirit of JESUS, is the reading of ABCDE, several others, with both the Syriac, the Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, Itala, and several of the fathers. The reading is undoubtedly genuine, and should be immediately restored to the text.

**Verse 8. *Came down to Troas***.— The Troad, or part of Phrygia Minor in which the celebrated city of Troy was formerly situated. This city was first built by Dardanus, who was its king, and from whom it was called Dardania; from Tros, his grandson, it was called Troja, or Troy; and from his son, Ilus, it was called Ilium. It has been long so completely destroyed that no ascertainable vestige of it remains; insomuch that some have even doubted of its existence. Those who contend for the reality of the history of Troy suppose it to have stood on the site of the modern village Bounarbachi, about twelve miles from the sea, on an eminence, at the termination of a spacious plain.

**Verse 9. *A vision appeared to Paul in the night***— Whether this was in a dream, or whether a representation made to the senses of the apostle, we cannot tell. A man of Macedonia appeared to him, and made this simple communication, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

Some suppose that the guardian angel of Macedonia appeared to St. Paul in a human shape; others, that it was a Divine communication made to his imagination in a dream.

**Verse 10. *We endeavored to go into Macedonia***— This is the first place that the historian St. Luke refers to himself: WE endeavored, etc. And, from this, it has been supposed that he joined the company of Paul, for the first time, at Troas.

***Assuredly gathering***— **συμβιβαζοντες**, Drawing an inference from the vision that had appeared.

***That the Lord had called us for to preach***— That is, they inferred that they were called to preach the Gospel in Macedonia, from what the vision had said, come over and help us; the help meaning, preach to us the Gospel. Instead of **ο κυριος**, the Lord, meaning JESUS, several MSS., such as ABCE, several others, with the Coptic, Vulgate, Theophylact, and Jerome, have **ο θεος**, GOD. Though this stands on very reputable authority, yet the former seems to be the better reading; for it was the SPIRIT OF JESUS, Acts 16:7, that would not suffer them to go into Bithynia, because he had designed that they should immediately preach the Gospel in Macedonia.

**Verse 11. *Loosing from Troas***— Setting sail from this place.

***With a straight course to Samothracia***— This was an island of the AEgean Sea, contiguous to Thrace, and hence called Samothracia, or the Thracian Samos. It is about twenty miles in circumference, and is now called Samandrachi by the Turks, who are its present masters.

***And the next day to Neapolis***.— There were many cities of this name; but this was a sea-port town of Macedonia, a few miles eastward of Philippi. Neapolis signifies the new city.

**Verse 12. *And from thence to Philippi***— This was a town of Macedonia, in the territory of the Edones, on the confines of Thrace, situated on the side of a steep eminence. It took its name from Philip II., king of Macedon. It is famous for two battles, fought between the imperial army, commanded by Octavianus, afterwards Augustus, and Mark Antony, and the republican army, commanded by Brutus and Cassius, in which these were successful; and a second, between Octavianus and Antony on the one part, and Brutus on the other. In this battle the republican troops were cut to pieces, after which Brutus killed himself. It was to the Church in this city that St. Paul wrote the epistle that still goes under their name. This place is still in being, though much decayed, and is the see of an archbishop.

***The chief city of that part of Macedonia***— This passage has greatly puzzled both critics and commentators. It is well known that, when Paulus AEmilius had conquered Macedonia, he divided it into four parts, **μερη**, and that he called the country that lay between the rivers Strymon and

Nessus, the first part, and made Amphipolis its chief city, or metropolis; Philippi, therefore, was not its chief city. But Bishop Pearce has, with great show of reason, argued that, though Amphipolis was made the chief city of it by Paulus AEmilius, yet Philippi might have been the chief city in the days of St. Paul, which was two hundred and twenty years after the division by P. AEmilius. Besides, as it was at this place that Augustus gained that victory which put him in possession of the whole Roman empire, might not he have given to it that dignity which was before enjoyed by Amphipolis? This is the most rational way of solving this difficulty; and therefore I shall not trouble the reader with the different modes that have been proposed to alter and amend the Greek text.

*And a colony*— That is, a colony of Rome; for it appears that a colony was planted here by Julius Caesar, and afterwards enlarged by Augustus; the people, therefore, were considered as freemen of Rome, and, from this, call themselves Romans, Acts 16:21. The Jewish definition of קלניא kolonia (for they have the Latin word in Hebrew letters, as St. Luke has it here, κολωνια, in Greek letters) is, a free city, which does not pay tribute.

**Verse 13.** *By a river side, where prayer was wont to be made*— ου ενομιζετο προσευχη ειναι, where it was said there was a proseucha. The proseucha was a place of prayer, or a place used for worship, where there was no synagogue. It was a large building uncovered, with seats, as in an amphitheatre. Buildings of this sort the Jews had by the sea side, and by the sides of rivers. See this subject considered at large in the note on Luke 6:12. It appears that the apostles had heard from some of the Gentiles, or from some of the Jews themselves, that there was a place of prayer by the river side; and they went out in quest of it, knowing that, as it was the Sabbath, they should find some Jews there.

*Spake unto the women*— Probably this was before the time of their public worship, and while they were waiting for the assembling of the people in general; and Paul improved the opportunity to speak concerning Christ and salvation to the women that resorted thither.

**Verse 14.** *Lydia, a seller of purple*— She probably had her name from the province of Lydia, in which the city of Thyatira was situated. The Lydian women have been celebrated for their beautiful purple manufactures.

***Which worshipped God***— That is, she was a proselyte to the Jewish religion; as were probably all the women that resorted hither.

***Whose heart the Lord opened***— As she was a sincere worshipper of God, she was prepared to receive the heavenly truths spoken by Paul and his companions; and, as she was faithful to the grace she had received, so God gave her more grace, and gave her now a Divine conviction that what was spoken by Paul was true; and therefore she attended unto the things—she believed them and received them as the doctrines of God; and in this faith she was joined by her whole family, and in it they were all baptized.

**Verse 15. *If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord***— The meaning seems to be this: If my present reception of the Gospel of Christ be a proof to you that I have been faithful to the Lord, in the light previously imparted, and that I am as likely to be faithful to this new grace as I have been to that already received, and, consequently, not likely by light or fickle conduct to bring any discredit on this Divine work, come into my house, and abide there. It is wrong to suppose that this woman had not received a measure of the light of God before this time.

***And she constrained us.***— She used such entreaties and persuasions that at last they consented to lodge there.

**Verse 16. *As we went to prayer***— εἰς προσευχῆν, Into the proseucha: see on Acts 16:13, and on Luke 6:12. The article, τὴν, is added here by ABCE, several others, Origen and Theophylact: thus makes the place more emphatic, and seems to determine the above meaning of προσευχῆν to be right—not the act of prayer or praying to God, but the place, the oratory, in which these proselytes assembled for the purpose of praying, reading the law and the prophets, and such like exercises of devotion. It appears that the apostles spent some time here; as it is evident, from this and the following verses, that they often resorted to this place to preach the Gospel.

***Possessed with a spirit of divination***— εχουσαν πνευμα πυθωνος, Having a spirit of Python, or of Apollo. Pytho was, according to fable, a huge serpent, that had an oracle at Mount Parnassus, famous for predicting future events; Apollo slew this serpent, and hence he was called Pythius, and became celebrated as the foreteller of future events; and all those, who



either could or pretended to predict future events, were influenced by the spirit of Apollo Pythius. As often-times the priestesses of this god became greatly agitated, and gave answers apparently from their bellies, when their mouths remained close, **πυθων** was applied to the **εγγαστριμυθοι**, or ventriloquists. Hesychius defines **πυθων**, **δαιμονιον μαντικον**, a divining demon; and it was evidently such a one that possessed this young woman, and which Paul expelled, Acts 16:18. See on this subject the notes on Leviticus 19:31, and Deuteronomy 18:11.

**Brought her masters much gain by soothsaying**— **μαντεουουενη**, By divination, or what we call telling fortunes. Our term soothsaying coming from the Anglo-Saxon (Anglo-Saxon), truth; and (Anglo-Saxon), to say, i.e. truth saying, or saying the truth. For, as it was supposed among the heathen that such persons spoke by the inspiration of their god, consequently what they said must be true. However, our translators might have used a term here that would not have been so creditable to this Pythoness; for, what she said concerning the apostles excepted, she certainly could not be supposed to tell the truth, while her inspiration came from him who is the father of lies. But Satan will sometimes conceal himself under the guise of truth, that he may the more effectually deceive. See below.

**Verse 17. *These men are the servants***, etc.— It is astonishing how such a testimony could be given in such a case; every syllable of it true, and at the same time full, clear, and distinct. But mark the deep design and artifice of this evil spirit: 1. He well knew that the Jewish law abhorred all magic, incantations, magical rites, and dealings with familiar spirits; he therefore bears what was in itself a true testimony to the apostles, that by it he may destroy their credit, and ruin their usefulness. The Jews, by this testimony, would be led at once to believe that the apostles were in compact with these demons, and that the miracles they wrought were done by the agency of these wicked spirits, and that the whole was the effect of magic; and this, of course, would harden their hearts against the preaching of the Gospel. 2. The GENTILES, finding that their own demon bore testimony to the apostles, would naturally consider that the whole was one system; that they had nothing to learn, nothing to correct; and thus the preaching of the apostles must be useless to them. In such a predicament is this, nothing could have saved the credit of the apostles but their

dispossessing this woman of her familiar spirit, and that in the most incontestable manner; for what could have saved the credit of Moses and Aaron, when the magicians of Egypt turned their rods into serpents, had not Aaron's rod devoured theirs? And what could have saved the credit of these apostles but the casting out of this spirit of divination, with which, otherwise, both Jews and Gentiles would have believed them in compact?

**Verse 18. *Paul, being grieved***— Probably for the reasons assigned above.

***Turned-to the spirit***— Not to the woman; she was only the organ by which the spirit acted.

***I command thee, in the name of Jesus***— Jesus is the Savior; Satan is Abaddon and Apollyon, the destroyer. The sovereign Savior says to the destroyer, Come out of her; and he came out in the same hour. Every circumstance of this case proves it to have been a real possession. We have already had several opportunities of remarking the great accuracy of St. Luke in his accounts of demoniacs: his education as a physician gave him advantages to detect imposture of this kind where it subsisted; but he sees none in this case. He speaks of the spirit and the damsel as distinct persons. The damsel had a spirit of divination. Paul turned to the spirit, and said, I command THEE to come out of HER; and he came out in the same hour. Had not St. Luke considered this as a real case of diabolic possession, he has made use of the most improper language he could choose; language and forms of speech calculated to deceive all his readers, and cause them to believe a lie. But it is impossible that the holy apostle could do so, because he was a good man; and it is not likely he could be deceived by a parcel of charlatans, because he was a wise man; and it would be absurd to suppose that, while he was under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he could be imposed on by the cunning of even the devil himself.

**Verse 19. *When her masters saw***— It appears she was maintained by some men, who received a certain pay from every person whose fortune she told, or to whom she made any discovery of stolen goods, etc., etc.

***The hope of their gains was gone***— ἡ ἐλπίς, This hope; viz. the spirit. So completely was this spirit cast out that the girl could divine no more; and yet she continued a heathen still, for we do not hear a word of her

conversion. Had she been converted, got baptized, and been associated with the apostles, the family of Lydia, etc., there would have been some show of reason to believe that there had been no possession in the case, and that the spirit of divination coming out of her meant no more than that, through scruple of conscience, she had left off her imposing arts, and would no longer continue to pretend to do what she knew she could not perform. But she still continued with her masters, though now utterly unable to disclose any thing relative to futurity!

***Drew them into the market-place***— This was the place of public resort, and, by bringing them here, they might hope to excite a general clamor against them; and probably those who are here called **τοὺς ἀρχόντας**, the rulers, were civil magistrates, who kept offices in such public places, for the preservation of the peace of the city. But these words, the rulers, are suspected to be an interpolation by some critics: I think on no good ground.

**Verse 20. *Brought them to the magistrates***— **στρατηγοίς**, The commanders of the army, who, very likely, as this city was a Roman colony, possessed the sovereign authority. The civil magistrates, therefore, having heard the case, as we shall soon find, in which it was pretended that the safety of the state was involved, would naturally refer the business to the decision of those who had the supreme command.

***Exceedingly trouble our city***— They are destroying the public peace, and endangering the public safety.

**Verse 21. *And teach customs***— **εἶθη**, Religious opinions, and religious rites.

***Which are not lawful for us to receive***— The Romans were very jealous of their national worship. Servius, on the following lines of Virgil, has given us correct information on this point; and has confirmed what several other writers have advanced: —

*Rex Evandrus ait: Non haec solemnia nobis  
Vana superstitio, veterumque ignara deorum,  
Imposuit. AEn. viii. v. 185, etc.*

King Evander said:—It is not vain superstition, ignorant of the ancient worship of the gods, which has imposed these rites on us. Duo dicit, says Servius: non ideo Herculem colimus; aut quia omnem religionem veram putamus; aut quia deos ignoramus antiquos. Cautum enim fuerat, et apud Athenienses, et apud Romanos; ne quis NOVAS introduceret RELIGIONES: unde et Socrates damnatus est: et Chaldaei et Judaei unt urbe depulsi.

“He says two things: we do not worship Hercules because we believe every religion to be true; nor are we ignorant of the ancient gods. Great care was taken, both among the Athenians and Romans, that no one should introduce any new religion. It was on this account that Socrates was condemned, and on this account the Chaldeans and the Jews were banished from Rome.”

CICERO, Deuteronomy Legibus, lib. ii. c. 8, says: Separatim nemo habessit deos; neve NOVOS; sed nec ADVENAS, nisi publice ADSCITOS, PRIVATIM colunto. “No person shall have any separate gods, nor new ones; nor shall he privately worship any strange gods, unless they be publicly allowed.” The whole chapter is curious. It was on such laws as these that the people of Philippi pleaded against the apostles. These men bring new gods, new worship, new rites; we are Romans, and the laws forbid us to worship any new or strange god, unless publicly allowed.

**Verse 22. *The multitude rose up together***— There was a general outcry against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes, and delivered them to the mob, commanding the lictors, or beadles, to beat them with rods, *ραβδιζειν*. This was the Roman custom of treating criminals, as Grotius has well remarked.

**Verse 23. *Laid many stripes upon them***— The Jews never gave more than thirty-nine stripes to any criminal; but the Romans had no law relative to this: they gave as many as they chose; and the apostles had, undoubtedly, the fullest measure. And perhaps St. Paul refers to this, where he says, 2 Corinthians 11:23: *εν πληγασις υπερβαλλοντως*, in stripes beyond measure or moderation.

**Verse 24. *The inner prison***— Probably what we would call the dungeon; the darkest and most secure cell.

***Made their feet fast in the stocks.***— The *το ξυλον*, which we here translate stocks, is supposed to mean two large pieces of wood, pierced with holes like our stocks, and fitted to each other, that, when the legs were in, they could not be drawn out. The holes being pierced at different distances, the legs might be separated or divaricated to a great extent, which must produce extreme pain. It is this circumstance to which it is supposed Prudentius refers, in speaking of the torments of St. Vincent: —

*Lignoque plantas inserit,  
Divaricatis cruribus.*

“They placed his feet in the stocks, his legs greatly distended!” If the apostles were treated in this way, lying on the bare ground with their flayed backs, what agony must they have suffered! However, they could sing praises notwithstanding.

**Verse 25. *At midnight Paul and Silas -sang praises***— Though these holy men felt much, and had reason to fear more, yet they are undismayed, and even happy in their sufferings: they were so fully satisfied that they were right, and had done their duty, that there was no room for regret or self-reproach. At the same times they had such consolations from God as could render any circumstances not only tolerable, but delightful. They prayed, first, for grace to support them, and for pardon and salvation for their persecutors; and then, secondly, sang praises to God, who had called them to such a state of salvation, and had accounted them worthy to suffer shame for the testimony of Jesus. And, although they were in the inner prison, they sang so loud and so heartily that the prisoners heard them.

**Verse 26. *There was a great earthquake***— Thus God bore a miraculous testimony of approbation to his servants; and, by the earthquake, and loosing the bonds of the prisoners, showed, in a symbolical way, the nature of that religion which they preached: while it shakes and terrifies the guilty, it proclaims deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound; and sets at liberty them that are bruised.

***Every one's bands were loosed.***— And yet so eminently did God's providence conduct every thing, that not one of the prisoners made his escape, though the doors were open, and his bolts off!

**Verse 27. *The keeper of the prison-would have killed himself***— Every jailor was made responsible for his prisoner, under the same penalty to which the prisoner himself was exposed. The jailor, awaking, and finding the prison-doors open, taking it for granted that all the prisoners had made their escape, and that he must lose his life on the account, chose rather to die by his own hand than by that of others. For it was customary among the heathens, when they found death inevitable, to take away their own lives. This custom was applauded by their philosophers, and sanctioned by some of their greatest men.

**Verse 28. *Do thyself no harm***— As it was now dark, being midnight, St. Paul must have had a Divine intimation of what the jailor was going to do; and, to prevent it, cried out aloud, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.

**Verse 29. *He called for a light***— That he might see how things stood, and whether the words of Paul were true; for on this his personal safety depended.

***Came trembling***— Terrified by the earthquake, and feeling the danger to which his own life was exposed.

***Fell down before Paul and Silas***— The persons whom a few hours before he, according to his office, treated with so much asperity, if not cruelty, as some have supposed; though, by the way, it does not appear that he exceeded his orders in his treatment of the apostles.

**Verse 30. *Brought them out***— Of the dungeon in which they were confined.

***What must I do to be saved?***— Whether this regard personal or eternal safety, it is a question the most interesting to man. But it is not likely that the jailor referred here to his personal safety. He had seen, notwithstanding the prison doors had been miraculously opened, and the bonds of the prisoners all loosed, that not one of them had escaped: hence he could not feel himself in danger of losing his life on this account; and consequently it cannot be his personal safety about which he inquires. He could not but have known that these apostles had been preaching among the people what they called the doctrine of salvation; and he knew that for expelling a demon they were delivered into his custody: the Spirit of God had now convinced his heart that he was lost, and needed salvation; and therefore

his earnest inquiry is how he should obtain it. The answer of the apostles to the jailor shows that his inquiry was not about his personal safety; as his believing on Jesus Christ could have had no effect upon that, in his present circumstances. Men who dispute against this sense of the word are not aware that the Spirit of God can teach any thing to a heart, which the head of a person has not previously learned. Therefore, they say it was impossible that a heathen could make such an inquiry in reference to his eternal state, because he could know nothing about it. On this ground, how impertinent would the answer of the apostles have been: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be put in a state of PERSONAL SAFETY, and thy family! I contend that neither he nor his family were in any danger, as long as not one prisoner had escaped; he had, therefore, nothing from this quarter to fear; and, on the ground against which I contend, his own question would have been as impertinent as the apostles' answer.

**Verse 31. *Believe on the Lord Jesus***— Receive the religion of Christ, which we preach, and let thy household also receive it, and ye shall be all placed in the sure way to final salvation.

**Verse 32. *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord***— Thus, by teaching him and all that were in his house the doctrine of the Lord, they plainly pointed out to them the way of salvation. And it appears that he and his whole family, who were capable of receiving instructions, embraced this doctrine, and showed the sincerity of their faith by immediately receiving baptism. And, by the way, if he and all his were baptized straightway, *παραχρημα*, immediately, instantly, at that very time, *dum ipsa res agitur*, it is by no means likely that there was any immersion in the case; indeed, all the circumstances of the case, the dead of the night, the general agitation, the necessity of despatch, and the words of the text, all disprove it. The apostles, therefore, had another method of administering baptism besides immersion, which, if practised according to the Jewish formalities, must have required considerable time, and not a little publicity. As the Jews were accustomed to receive whole families of heathens, young and old, as proselytes, by baptism, so here the apostles received whole families, those of Lydia and the jailor, by the same rite. It is therefore pretty evident that we have in this chapter very presumptive proofs: 1. That baptism was administered without immersion, as in the case of the jailor and his family; and 2. That children were also received

into the Church in this way; for we can scarcely suppose that the whole families of Lydia and the jailor had no children in them; and, if they had, it is not likely that they should be omitted; for the Jewish practice was invariably to receive the heathen children with their proselyted parents.

**Verse 33. *Washed their stripes***— ελουσεν απο των πληγων, He washed from the stripes: i.e. he washed the blood from the wounds; and this would not require putting them into a pool, or bath, as some have ridiculously imagined.

**Verse 34. *He set meat before them***— They were sufficiently exhausted, and needed refreshment; nor had the apostles any such inherent miraculous power as could prevent them from suffering through hunger, or enable them to heal their own grounds. As they were the instruments of bringing health to his soul, he became the instrument of health to their bodies. Genuine faith in Christ will always be accompanied with benevolence and humanity, and every fruit that such dispositions can produce. The jailor believed-brought them into his house-washed their stripes-and set meat before them.

**Verse 35. *And the magistrates sent the sergeants***— The original word, παβδουχους, means the lictors, persons who carried before the consul the fasces, which was a hatchet, round the handle of which was a bundle of rods tied. Why the magistrates should have sent an order to dismiss the apostles, whom they had so barbarously used the preceding evening, we cannot tell, unless we receive the reading of the Codex Bezae as genuine, viz. ἡμερας δε γενομενης, συνηλθον οι στρατηγοι επι το αυτο εις την αγοραν, και αναμνησθεντες τον σεισμον τον γεγοντα, εφοβηθησαν, και απεστειλαν τους ραβδουχους κ. τ. λ. And when it was day, the magistrates came together into the court, AND REMEMBERING THE EARTHQUAKE THAT HAD HAPPENED, they were afraid, and they sent the sergeants, etc. The Itala version of this same MS. has the same reading: so has also the margin of the later Syriac. If this MS. be correct, the cause of the dismissal of the apostles is at once evident: the earthquake had alarmed the magistrates; and, taking it for granted that this was a token of the Divine displeasure against them for their unprincipled conduct towards those good men, they wished to get as quietly rid of the business as they could, and therefore sent to dismiss the apostles. Whether this reading be



genuine or not, it is likely that it gives the true cause of the magistrates' conduct.

**Verse 37. *They have beaten us openly-being Romans***— St. Paul well knew the Roman laws; and on their violation by the magistrates he pleads. The Valerian law forbade any Roman citizen to be bound. The Porcian law forbade any to be beaten with rods. “Poreia lex virgas ab omnium civium Romanorum corpore amovit.” And by the same law the liberty of a Roman citizen was never put in the power of the lictor. “Porcia lex libertatem civium lictori eripuit.” See CICERO, Orat. pro Rabirio. Hence, as the same author observes, In Verrem, Orat. 5: “Facinus est vinciri civem Romanum, scelus verberari.” It is a transgression of the law to bind a Roman citizen: it is wickedness to scourge him. And the illegality of the proceedings of these magistrates was farther evident in their condemning and punishing them unheard. This was a gross violation of a common maxim in the Roman law. Causa cognita, possunt multi absolvi; incognita, nemo condemnari potest. Cicero. “Many who are accused of evil may be absolved, when the cause is heard; but unheard, no man can be condemned.” Every principle of the law of nature and the law of nations was violated in the treatment these holy men met with from the unprincipled magistrates of this city.

***Let them come themselves and fetch us out.***— The apostles were determined that the magistrates should be humbled for their illegal proceedings; and that the people at large might see that they had been unjustly condemned, and that the majesty of the Roman people was insulted by the treatment they had received.

**Verse 38. *They feared when they heard-they were Romans.***— They feared, because the Roman law was so constituted that an insult offered to a citizen was deemed an insult to the whole Roman people. There is a remarkable addition here, both in the Greek and Latin of the Codex Bezae. It is as follows: “And when they were come with many of their friends to the prison, they besought them to go out, saying: We were ignorant of your circumstances, that ye were righteous men. And, leading them out, they besought them, saying, Depart from this city, lest they again make an insurrection against you, and clamor against you.”

**Verse 40. *Entered into the house of Lydia***— This was the place of their residence while at Philippi: see Acts 16:15.

*They comforted them, and departed.*— The magistrates were sufficiently humbled, and the public at large, hearing of this circumstance, must be satisfied of the innocency of the apostles. They, therefore, after staying a reasonable time at the house of Lydia, and exhorting the brethren, departed; having as yet to go farther into Macedonia, and to preach the Gospel in the most polished city in the world, the city of Athens. See the succeeding chapter.

GREAT and lasting good was done by this visit to Philippi: a Church was there founded, and the members of it did credit to their profession. To them the apostle, who had suffered so much for their sakes, was exceedingly dear; and they evidenced this by their contributions to his support in the times of his necessity. They sent him money twice to Thessalonica, Philippians 4:16, and once to Corinth, 2 Corinthians 11:9, and long afterwards, when he was prisoner in Rome, Philippians 4:9, 14, 18. About five or six years after this, St. Paul visited Philippi on his way to Jerusalem, and he wrote his epistle to them about ten years after his first journey thither. The first members of the Church of Christ in this place were Lydia and her family; and the next in all probability were the jailor and his family. These doubtless became the instruments of bringing many more to the faith; for the false imprisonment and public acquittal of the apostles by the magistrates must have made their cause popular; and thus the means which were used to prevent the sowing of the seed of life in this city became the means by which it was sown and established. Thus the wrath of man praised God; and the remainder of it he did restrain. Never were these words more exactly fulfilled than on this occasion.

## CHAPTER 17.

*Paul and his company, passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, come to Thessalonica, where they preach the Gospel to the Jews, several of whom believe, 1-4. Others raise a mob, and bring Jason, who had received the apostles, before the magistrates, who, having taken bail of him and his companions, dismiss them, 5-9. Paul and Silas are sent away by night unto Berea, where they preach to the Jews, who gladly receive the Gospel, 10-12. Certain Jews from Thessalonica, hearing that the Bereans had received the Gospel, come thither and raise up a persecution, 13. Paul is sent away by the brethren to Athens, where he preaches to the Jews, 14-17. He is encountered by the Epicureans and Stoics, who bring him to the Areopagus, and desire him to give a full explanation of his doctrine, 18-20. The character of the Athenians, 21. Paul preaches to them, and gives a general view of the essential principles of theology, 22-31. Some mock, some hesitate, and some believe, and, among the latter, Dionysias and Damaris, 32-34.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 17.

**Verse 1. *Passed through Amphipolis***— This city was the metropolis of the first division of Macedonia, as made by Paulus AEmilius: see the note on Acts 16:10. It was builded by Cimon, the Athenian general, who sent 10,000 Athenians thither as a colony. It stood in an island in the river Strymon, and had its name of Amphipolis because included between the two grand branches of that river where they empty themselves into the sea, the river being on both sides of the city.

***Apollonia***— This was another city of Macedonia, between Amphipolis and Thessalonica. It does not appear that St. Paul stopped at any of these cities: and they are only mentioned by the historian as places through which the apostles passed on their way to Thessalonica. It is very likely that in these cities there were no Jews; and that might have been the reason why the apostles did not preach the Gospel there, for we find them almost constantly beginning with the Jews; and the Hellenist Jews, living among

the Gentiles, became the medium through which the Gospel of Christ was conveyed to the heathen world.

**Thessalonica**— This was a celebrated city of Macedonia, situated on what was called the Thermaic Gulf. According to Stephanus Byzantinus, it was embellished and enlarged by Philip, king of Macedon, who called it Thessalonica, the victory of Thessalia, on account of the victory he obtained there over the Thessalians; but, prior to this, it was called Thermae. But Strabo, Tzetzes, and Zonaras, say that it was called Thessalonica, from Thessalonica, wife of Cassander, and daughter of Philip. It is now in possession of the Turks, and is called Salonichi, which is a mere corruption of the original name.

**A synagogue of the Jews.**— ἡ συναγωγή, THE synagogue; for the article here must be considered as emphatic, there probably being no other synagogue in any other city in Macedonia. The Jews in different parts had other places of worship called proseuchas. as we have seen, Acts 16:13. At Thessalonica alone they appear to have had a synagogue.

**Verse 2. As his manner was**— He constantly offered salvation first to the Jews; and for this purpose attended their Sabbath-days' meetings at their synagogues.

**Verse 3. Opening and alleging**— παρατιθεμνος, Proving by citations. His method seems to have been this: 1st. He collected the scriptures that spoke of the Messiah. 2d. He applied these to Jesus Christ, showing that in him all these scriptures were fulfilled, and that he was the Savior of whom they were in expectation. He showed also that the Christ, or Messiah, must needs suffer—that this was predicted, and was an essential mark of the true Messiah. By proving this point, he corrected their false notion of a triumphant Messiah, and thus removed the scandal of the cross.

**Verse 4. The devout Greeks**— That is, Gentiles who were proselytes to the Jewish religion, so far as to renounce idolatry, and live a moral life, but probably had not received circumcision.

**Verse 5. The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them**— Instead of this sentence, the most correct MSS. and versions read simply, προσλαβομενοι δε οι ιουδαιοι. But the Jews taking, etc.,

leaving out the words, **ζηλωσαντες, απειθουντες**, which believed not, moved with envy: these words do not appear to be genuine; there is the strongest evidence against them, and they should be omitted.

***Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort***— This is not a very intelligible translation. The original is, **των αγοραιων τινας ανδοας πονηρους**. The word **αγοραιοι**, which we translate the baser sort, is by Hesychius explained, **οι εν αγορα αναστρεφομενοι**, those who transact business in courts of justice. The same word is used by the Jews in Hebrew letters to signify judges; and **אגוריות של גוים** agoriot shel goyim, signifies judges of the Gentiles. These were probably a low kind of lawyers, what we would call pettifoggers, or attorneys without principle, who gave advice for a trifle, and fomented disputes and litigations among the people. The Itala version of the Codex Bezae calls them quosdam forenses, certain lawyers. As the Jews, from their small number, could not easily raise up a mob, they cunningly employed those unprincipled men, who probably had a certain degree of juridical credit and authority, to denounce the apostles as seditious men; and this was, very likely, the reason why they employed those in preference to any others. They were such as always attended forensic litigations, waiting for a job, and willing to defend any side of a question for money. They were wicked men of the forensic tribe.

***Gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar***— And, after having made this sedition and disturbance, charged the whole on the peaceable and innocent apostles! This is precisely the same way that persecution against the truth and followers of Christ is still carried on. Some wicked man in the parish gets a wicked attorney and a constable to head a mob, which they themselves have raised; and, having committed a number of outrages, abusing men and women, haul the minister of Christ to some magistrate who knows as little of his office as he cares for the Gospel; they there charge the outrages which themselves have committed on the preacher and his peaceable hearers; and the peacemaker, appointed by a good king, according to the wise and excellent regulations of a sound constitution, forgetting whose minister he is, neither administers justice nor maintains truth; but, espousing the part of the mob, assumes, ex officio, the character of a persecutor. The preacher is imprisoned, his hearers fined for listening to that Gospel which has not only made them wise unto salvation, but also peaceable and orderly citizens, and which

would have had the same effect on the unprincipled magistrate, the parish squire, and the mob, had they heard it with the same reverence and respect. Had I not witnessed such scenes, and such prostitution of justice, I could not have described them.

***Assaulted the house of Jason***— This was the place where the apostles lodged; and therefore his goods were clear spoil, and his person fair game. This is a case which frequently occurs where the Gospel is preached in its spirit and power. And, even in this moat favored kingdom, the most scandalous excesses of this kind have been committed, and a justice of the peace has been found to sanction the proceedings; and, when an appeal has been made to the laws, a grand jury has been found capable of throwing out the true bill!

**Verse 6. *These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also***— The very character our forefathers had for preaching that Gospel, in every part of the land, by which the nation has been illuminated, the mob disciplined into regularity and order, and the kingdom established in the hands of the best of monarchs.

**Verse 7. *These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar***— Persecutors always strive to affect the lives of the objects of their hatred, by accusing them of sedition, or plots against the state.

***That there is another king, one Jesus.***— How malevolent was this saying! The apostles proclaimed Jesus as king—that is true; but never once insinuated that his kingdom was of this world. The reverse they always maintained.

**Verse 8. *And they troubled the people and the rulers***— It is evident that there was no disposition in either the people or the rulers to persecute the apostles. But these wicked Jews, by means of the unprincipled, wicked lawyers, those lewd fellows of the baser sort, threw the subject into the form of law, making it a state question, in which form the rulers were obliged to notice it; but they showed their unwillingness to proceed in a matter which they saw proceeded from malice, by letting Jason and his companions go off on bail.

**Verse 9. *Taken security***— λαβοντες το ικανον, Having taken what was sufficient, or satisfactory. Sufficient for the present, to prove that the

apostles were upright, peaceable, and loyal men; and that Jason and his friends were the like, and would be, at any time, forthcoming to answer for their conduct. Perhaps this is the sense of the phrase in the text.

**Verse 10. *Sent away Paul and Silas by night***— Fearing some farther machinations of the Jews and their associates.

***Berea***— This was another city of Macedonia, on the same gulf with Thessalonica; and not far from Pella, the birth place of Alexander the Great.

**Verse 11. *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica***— ἦσαν εὐγενεστεροί, Were of a better race, extraction, or birth, than those at Thessalonica; but the word refers more to their conduct, as a proof of their better disposition, than to their birth, or any peculiar lineal nobility. It was a maxim among the Jews, that “none was of a noble spirit who did not employ himself in the study of the law.” It appears that the Bereans were a better educated and more polished people than those at Thessalonica; in consequence far from persecuting: 1. They heard the doctrine of the Gospel attentively. 2. They received this doctrine with readiness of mind: when the evidence of its truth appeared to them sufficiently convincing, they had too much dignity of mind to refuse their assent, and too much ingenuousness to conceal their approbation. 3. They searched the Scriptures, i.e. of the Old Testament, to see whether these things were so: to see whether the promises and types corresponded with the alleged fulfillment in the person, works, and sufferings of Jesus Christ. 4. They continued in this work; they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

**Verse 12. *Therefore many of them believed***— From the manner in which they heard, received, and examined the word preached to them, it was not likely they could be deceived. And, as it was the truth that was proclaimed to them, it is no wonder that they apprehended, believed, and embraced it.

***Of honorable women which were Greeks***— Probably mere heathens are meant; and these were some of the chief families in the place. Thus we find that the preaching of Paul at Berea was made the instrument of converting both Jews and Gentiles.

**Verse 13. *The Jews of Thessalonica-stirred up the people.***— With what implacable malice did these men persecute the Gospel! And in the same spirit they continue to the present day, though it is evidently the sole cause of their wretchedness.

**Verse 14. *To go as it were to the sea***— This passage is generally understood to mean that the disciples took Paul towards the sea, as if he had intended to embark, and return to Troas, but with the real design to go to Athens. But it is more likely that his conductors, in order to his greater safety, left the public or more frequented road, and took him coastwise to Athens. Or, by taking a vessel at that part of the sea nearest to Berea, they might have coasted it to Athens, which was quite a possible case; and, as we do not hear of his stopping at any place on his journey to preach, it is very probable that he went by sea to this city. Though sleights and feints may be allowable in cases of life and death, yet there does not appear an absolute necessity for any in this case. And, as the text does not necessarily point any out, so we need not have recourse to any. I take it for granted, therefore, that Paul went by sea to Athens.

***Silas and Timotheus abode there still.***— The persecution, it seems, was directed principally against Paul. Lo! he stayeth his rough wind on the day of his east wind. Silas and Timotheus, holy men, were left behind to water the seed which Paul had planted.

**Verse 15. *Brought him unto Athens***— This was one of the most celebrated cities in the world, whether we consider its antiquity, its learning, its political consequence, or the valor of its inhabitants. This city, which was the capital of Attica, and the seat of the Grecian empire was founded by Cecrops, about A.M. 2447, before Christ 1557, and was called by him Cecropia. About thirteen or fourteen hundred years before Christ, in the reign either of Erechtheus, or Erichthonius, it was called Athens, from  $\alpha\theta\eta\nu\eta$ , a name of Minerva, to whom it was dedicated, and who was always considered the protectress of the city. The whole city at first was built upon a hill or rock, in the midst of a spacious plain; but, in process of time, the whole plain was covered with buildings which were called the lower city; while the ancient was called Acropolis, or the upper city. In its most flourishing state this city was not less than one hundred and seventy-eight stadia, or twenty-two Roman miles in circumference. The



buildings of Athens were the most superb, and best executed, in the world; but every thing is now in a state of ruin. Mr. Stuart, in his three folio vols. of the Antiquities of Athens, has given correct representations of those that remain, with many geographical notices of much importance. The greatest men that ever lived, scholars, lawyers, statesmen, and warriors, were Athenians. Its institutions, laws, and literature, were its own unrivalled boast, and the envy of the world. The city still exists; the Acropolis in a state of comparative repair. It is now in the hands of the Greeks; but the Turks, who held it till lately, have turned the celebrated Parthenon, or temple of Minerva, into a mosque. The inhabitants are reckoned at about one thousand. Christianity, planted here by St. Paul, still subsists; and about two-thirds of the inhabitants of Athens are Christians, who have several churches or oratories here, and it is the residence of a Greek bishop, who is a metropolitan. He who considers the ancient glory of this city, whether in its heathen or Christian antiquity, cannot but sigh over its present state.

**Verse 16.** *He saw the city wholly given to idolatry.*— κατειδωλον, Full of idols, as the margin has it, and very properly. Whoever examines the remains of this city, as represented by Mr. Stuart in his Antiquities, already referred to, will be satisfied of the truth of St. Luke's remark: it was full of idols. Bishop Pearce produces a most apposite quotation from Pausanias, which confirms the observation: ουκ ην αλλαχου τοσαυτα ιδειν ειδωλα. There was no place where so many idols were to be seen. PAUS. in Attic. cap. xvii. 24.

PETRONIUS, who was contemporary with St. Paul, in his Satyr. cap. xvii., makes Quartilla say of Athens: Utique nostra regio tam PRAESSENTIBUS PLENA EST NUMINIBUS, ut facilius possis DEUM quam HOMINEM invenire. Our region is so full of deities that you may more frequently meet with a god than a man.

**Verse 17.** *Disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews*— Proving that Jesus was the Messiah: and with the devout persons, probably heathens, proselyted to the Jewish religion. And in the market: I suppose the αγορα here means some such place as our exchange, where people of business usually met, and where the philosophers conversed and reasoned. The agora was probably like the Roman forum, and like places of public resort

in all countries, where people of leisure assembled to converse, hear the news, etc.

**Verse 18. *Certain philosophers of the Epicureans***— These were the followers of Epicurus, who acknowledged no gods except in name, and absolutely denied that they exercised any government over the world or its inhabitants; and that the chief good consisted in the gratification of the appetites of sense. These points the Epicureans certainly held; but it is not clear that Epicurus himself maintained such doctrines.

***And of the Stoics***— These did not deny the existence of the gods; but they held that all human affairs were governed by fate. They did not believe that any good was received from the hands of their gods; and considered, as Seneca asserts, that any good and wise man was equal to Jupiter himself. Both these sects agreed in denying the resurrection of the body; and the former did not believe in the immortality of the soul.

EPICURUS, the founder of the Epicurean sect, was born at Athens, about A.M. 3663, before Christ 341.

ZENO, the founder of the Stoic sect, was born in the isle of Cyprus, about thirty years before Christ. His disciples were called Stoics from the **στοα**, a famous portico at Athens, where they studied. Besides these two sects, there were two others which were famous at this time; viz. the Academics and the Peripatetics. The founder of the first was the celebrated PLATO; and the founder of the second, the no less famous ARISTOTLE. These sects professed a much purer doctrine than the Epicureans and Stoics; and it does not appear that they opposed the apostles, nor did they enter into public disputations with them. Against the doctrines taught by the Epicureans and Stoics, several parts of St. Paul's discourse, in the following verses, are directly pointed.

***What will this babbling say?***— The word **σπερμολογος**, which we translate babbling, signifies, literally, a collector of seeds, and is the "name of a small bird the lives by picking up seeds on the road." The epithet became applied to persons who collected the sayings of others, without order or method, and detailed them among their companions in the same way. The application of the term to prating, empty, impertinent persons,

was natural and easy, and hence it was considered a term of reproach and contempt, and was sometimes used to signify the vilest sort of men.

*A setter forth of strange gods*— ξενων δαιμονιων, Of strange or foreign demons. That this was strictly forbidden, both at Rome and Athens, see on Acts 16:21.

There was a difference, in the heathen theology, between θεος, god, and δαιμων, demon: the θεοι, were such as were gods by nature: the δαιμονια, were men who were deified. This distinction seems to be in the mind of these philosophers when they said that the apostles seemed to be setters forth of strange demons, because they preached unto them Jesus, whom they showed to be a man, suffering and dying, but afterwards raised to the throne of God. This would appear to them tantamount with the deification of heroes, etc., who had been thus honored for their especial services to mankind. Horace expresses this in two lines, 2 Epist. i. 5: —

*Romulus, et Liber pater, et cum Castore Pollux,  
Post ingentia facta, deorum in templa recepti.  
“Romulus, father Bacchus, with Castor and Pollux,  
for their eminent services, have been received into the temples of the gods.”*

**Verse 19.** *They took him, and brought him unto Areopagus*— The Areopagus was a hill not far from the Acropolis, already described, where the supreme court of justice was held; one of the most sacred and reputable courts that had ever existed in the Gentile world. It had its name, αρειος παγος, Areopagus, or the Hill of Mars, or Ares, from the circumstance, according to poetic fiction, of Mars being tried there, by a court of twelve gods, for the murder of Halirrhothius, son of Neptune: the meaning of which is, that Ares, a Thessalian prince, having slain Halirrhothius, the son of a neighboring prince, for having violated his daughter Alcippe, was here tried by twelve judges, by whom he was honourably acquitted: in the Athenian laws the death of the ravisher was the regular forfeiture for his crime. The justice administered in this court was so strict and impartial, that, it was generally allowed, both the plaintiff and defendant departed satisfied with the decision. “Innocence, when summoned before it, appeared without apprehension; and the guilty, convicted and condemned, retired with out daring to murmur.” The place in which the judges sat was uncovered; and they held their sittings by night,

to the end that nothing might distract their minds from the great business on which they were to decide; and that the sight of the accused might not affect them either with pity or aversion. In reference to this, all pleaders were strictly forbidden to use any means whatever to excite either pity or aversion, or to affect the passions; every thing being confined to simple relation, or statement of facts. When the two parties were produced before the court, they were placed between the bleeding members of victims slain on the occasion, and were obliged to take an oath, accompanied by horrible imprecations on themselves and families, that they would testify nothing but truth. These parties called to witness the eumenides, or furies, the punishers of the perjured in the infernal world; and, to make the greater impression on the mind of the party swearing, the temple dedicated to these infernal deities was contiguous to the court, so that they appeared as if witnessing the oaths and recording the appeal made to themselves. When the case was fully heard, the judges gave their decision by throwing down their flint pebbles, on two boards or tables, one of which was for the condemnation, the other for the acquittal, of the person in question.

**Verse 20.** *Thou bringest-strange things to our ears*— The doctrine of the apostles was different from any they had ever heard: it was wholly spiritual and divine; thus it was strange: it was contrary to their customs and manners; and thus it was strange also. As it spoke much of the exaltation and glory of Jesus Christ, they supposed him to be a setter forth of strange gods: and, therefore, on the authority of the laws, which forbade the introduction of any new deities, or modes of worship, he was called before the Areopagus.

**Verse 21.** *All the Athenians and strangers which were there*— As Athens was renovated for its wisdom and learning, it became a place of public resort for philosophers and students from different parts of the then civilized world. The flux of students was in consequence great; and these, having much leisure time, would necessarily be curious to know what was passing in the world, and would frequently assemble together, in places of public resort, to meet with strangers just come to the city; and either, as St. Luke says, to tell or hear some new thing.

“The Athenian writers give the same account of their fellow citizens. DEMOSTHENES, in his reply to Epist. Philippi, represents the Athenians as

πυνθανομενοι κατα την αγοραν, ει τι λεγεται νεωτερον; inquiring, in the place of public resort, if there are any NEWS. We find, likewise, that when Thucydides, iii. 38, had said, μετα καινοτητος μεν λογου απατασθαι αριστοι, Ye are excellent in suffering yourselves to be deceived by NOVELTY of speech, the old scholiast makes this remark upon it, (almost in the words of St. Luke,) ταυτα προς τους αθηνοιους αιγιττεται, ουδεν τι μελετωντας, πλην λεγειν τι και ακουειν καινον; He here blames the Athenians, who made it their only business to tell and hear something that was NEW.”-Bp. Pearce. This is a striking feature of the city of London in the present day. The itch for news, which generally argues a worldly, shallow, or unsettled mind, is wonderfully prevalent: even ministers of the Gospel, negligent of their sacred function, are become in this sense Athenians; so that the book of God is neither read nor studied with half the avidity and spirit as a newspaper. These persons, forgetful not only of their calling, but of the very spirit of the Gospel, read the account of a battle with the most violent emotions; and, provided the victory falls to their favourite side, they exult and triumph in proportion to the number of thousands that have been slain! It is no wonder if such become political preachers, and their sermons be no better than husks for swine. To such the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed. God pity such miserable Athenians, and direct them to a more suitable employment!

**Verse 22. *Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill***— That is, in the midst of the judges, who sat in the Areopagus.

***Ye are too superstitious.***— κατα παντα ως δεισιδαιμονεστερους υμας θεωρω; I perceive that in all respects ye are greatly addicted to religious practices; and, as a religious people, you will candidly hear what I have got to say in behalf of that worship which I practice and recommend. See farther observations at the end of the chapter. {Acts 17:34}

**Verse 23. *Beheld your devotions***— σεβασματα, The objects of your worship; the different images of their gods which they held in religious veneration, sacrificial instruments, altars, etc., etc.

***TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.***— αγνωστο θεω. That there was an altar at Athens thus inscribed, we cannot doubt after such a testimony; though St. Jerome questions it in part; for he says St. Paul found the inscription in the plural number, but, because he would not appear to acknowledge a plurality of

gods, he quoted it in the singular: Verum, quia Paulus non pluribus Diis indigebat ignotis, sed uno tantum ignoto Deo, singulari verbo usus est. Epist. ad Magn. This is a most foolish saying: had Paul done so, how much would such a begging of the question have prejudiced his defense in the minds of his intelligent judges! OEcumenius intimates that St. Paul does not give the whole of the inscription which this famous altar bore; and which he says was the following: **ΘΕΟΙΣ ΑΣΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΩΠΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΙΒΥΗΣ, ΘΕΩ ΑΓΝΩΣΤΩ ΚΑΙ ΞΕΝΩ**, To the gods of Asia, and Europe, and Africa: TO THE UNKNOWN and strange GOD. Several eminent men suppose that this unknown god was the God of the Jews; and, as his name יהוה was considered by the Jews as ineffable, the **ΘΕΟΣ ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟΣ** may be considered as the anonymous god; the god whose name was not known, and must not be pronounced. That there was such a god acknowledged at Athens we have full proof. Lucian in his *Philopatris*, cap. xiii. p. 769, uses this form of an oath: **νη τον αγνωστον τον εν αθηναις**, I swear by the UNKNOWN GOD at ATHENS. And again, cap. xxix. 180: **ημεις δε τον εν αθηναις αγνωστον εφευροντες και προσκυνησαντες, χειρας εις ουρανον εκτειναντες, τουτω ευχαριστησομεν ως καταξιωθεντες**, etc. We have found out the UNKNOWN god at ATHENS-and worshipped him with our hands stretched up to heaven; and we will gave thanks unto him, as being thought worthy to be subject to this power. Bp. Pearce properly asks, Is it likely that Lucian, speaking thus, (whether in jest or in earnest,) should not have had some notion of there being at Athens an altar inscribed to the unknown God? Philostratus, in *vit. Apollon.* vi. 3, notices the same thing, though he appears to refer to several altars thus inscribed: **και ταυτα αθηνησι, ου και αγνωστων θεων βωμοι ιδρυνται**, And this at ATHENS, where there are ALTARS even to the UNKNOWN GODS. Pausanias, in *Attic.* cap. 1. p. 4, edit. Kuhn., says that at Athens there are **βωμοι θεων των ονομαζομενων αγνωστων**, altars of gods which are called, The UNKNOWN ones. Minutius Felix says of the Romans, *Aras extruunt etiam ignotis numinibus.* “They even build altars to UNKNOWN DIVINITIES.” And Tertullian, *contra Marcion*, says, *Invenio plane Diis ignotis aras prostitutas: sed Attica idolatria est.* “I find altars allotted to the worship of unknown gods: but this is an Attic idolatry.” Now, though in these last passages, both gods and altars are spoken of in the plural number; yet it is reasonable to suppose that, on each, or upon some one of them, the inscription **αγνωστω θεω**, To the unknown god, was actually

found. The thing had subsisted long and had got from Athens to Rome in the days of Tertullian and Minutius Felix. See Bp. Pearce and Dr. Cudworth, to whose researches this note is much indebted.

***Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship***— There is here a fine paronomasia, or play on the words. The apostle tells them that (on their system) they were a very religious people—that they had an altar inscribed, *αγνωστω θεω*, to the unknown God: him therefore, says he, whom, *αγνωουντες*, ye unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you. Assuming it as a truth, that, as the true God was not known by them, and that there was an altar dedicated to the unknown god, his God was that god whose nature and operations he now proceeded to declare. By this fine turn he eluded the force of that law which made it a capital offense to introduce any new god into the state, and of the breach of which he was charged, Acts 17:18; and thus he showed that he was bringing neither new god nor new worship among them; but only explaining the worship of one already acknowledged by the state, though not as yet known.

**Verse 24. *God that made the world***, etc.— Though the Epicureans held that the world was not made by God, but was the effect of a fortuitous concourse of atoms, yet this opinion was not popular; and the Stoics held the contrary: St. Paul assumes, as an acknowledged truth, that there was a God who made the world and all things. 2. That this God could not be confined within temples made with hands, as he was the Lord or governor of heaven and earth. 3. That, by fair consequence, the gods whom they worshipped, which were shut up in their temples could not be this God; and they must be less than the places in which they were contained. This was a strong, decisive stroke against the whole system of the Grecian idolatry.

**Verse 25. *Neither is worshiped with men's hands***— This is an indirect stroke against making of images, and offering of sacrifices: he is not worshipped with human hands, as if he needed any thing, or required to be represented under a particular form or attitude; nor has he required victims for his support; for it is impossible that he should need any thing who himself gives being, form, and life, to all creatures.

***Giveth-life, and breath, and all things***— These words are elegantly introduced by St. Paul: God gives life, because he is the fountain of it: he

gives breath, the faculty of breathing or respiration, by which this life is preserved; and though breathing or respiration, be the act of the animal, yet the **πνοην**, the faculty of breathing, and extracting from the atmosphere what serves as a pabulum of life, is given by the influence of God, and the continued power thus to respire, and extract that pure oxygen gas which is so evident a support of animal life, is as much the continued gift of God as life itself is. But, as much more is necessary to keep the animal machine in a state of repair, God gives the **τα παντα**, all the other things which are requisite for this great and important purpose, that the end for which life was given may be fully answered. St. Paul also teaches that Divine worship is not enacted and established for GOD, but for the use of his creatures: he needs nothing that man can give him; for man has nothing but what he has received from the hand of his Maker.

**Verse 26. Hath made of one blood**— In AB, some others, with the Coptic, AEthiopic, Vulgate, Itala, Clement, and Bede, the word **αιματος**, blood, is omitted. He hath made of one (meaning Adam) all nations of men; but **αιμα**, blood, is often used by the best writers for race, stock, kindred: so Homer, Iliad, vi. ver. 211:

**ταυτης τοι γενεης τε και αιματος ευχομαι ειναι.**

*I glory in being of that same race and blood.  
So Virgil, AEn. viii. ver. 142, says;*

*Sic genus amborum scindit se SANGUINE ab uno.*

*Thus, from one stock, do both our stems divide.*

See many examples of this form in Kypke. The Athenians had a foolish notion that they were self-produced, and were the aboriginals of mankind. Lucian ridicules this opinion, **αθηναιοι φασι τους πρωτους ανθρωπους εκ της αττικης αναφοναι, καθαπερ τα λαχανα**. The Athenians say that the first men sprung up in Attica, like radishes. Luc. Philo-pseud. 3.

**To dwell on all the face of the earth**— God in his wisdom produced the whole human race from one man; and, having in his providence scattered them over the face of the earth, by showing them that they sprang from one common source, has precluded all those contentious wars and bloodshed which would necessarily have taken place among the nations of



the world, as each in its folly might have arrogated to itself a higher and more excellent origin than another.

***And hath determined the times before appointed***— Instead of **προτεταγμενους καιρους**, the times before appointed, ABDE, and more than forty others, with both the Syriac, all the Arabic, the Coptic, AEthiopic, MS. Slavonian, Vulgate, and Itala, read **προστεταγμενους καιρους**, the appointed times. The difference between the two words is this: **προτασσειν** signifies to place before others; but **προστασσειν** is to command, decree, appoint. The **προστεταγμενοι καιροι**, are the constituted or decreed times; that is, the times appointed by his providence, on which the several families should go to those countries where his wisdom designed they should dwell. See Genesis 10:5-32; and see Pearce and Rosenmuller.

***And the bounds of their habitations***— Every family being appointed to a particular place, that their posterity might possess it for the purposes for which infinite wisdom and goodness gave them their being, and the place of their abode. Every nation had its lot thus appointed by God, as truly as the Israelites had the land of Canaan. But the removal of the Jews from their own land shows that a people may forfeit their original inheritance, and thus the Canaanites have been supplanted by the Jews; the Jews by the Saracens; the Saracens by the Turks; the Greeks by the Romans; the Romans by the Goths and Vandals; and so of others. See the notes on Genesis 11:1-32.

**Verse 27. *That they should seek the Lord***— This is a conclusion drawn from the preceding statement. God, who is infinitely great and self-sufficient, has manifested himself as the maker of the world, the creator, preserver, and governor of men. He has assigned them their portion, and dispensed to them their habitations, and the various blessings of his providence, to the end that they should seek him in all his works.

***Feel after him***— **ψηλαφησειαν αυτον**, That they might grope after him, as a person does his way who is blind or blindfolded. The Gentiles, who had not a revelation, must grope after God, as the principle of spiritual life, that they might find him to be a Spirit, and the source of all intellectual happiness; and the apostle seems to state that none need despair of finding this fountain of goodness, because he is not far from every one of us.

**Verse 28. *For in him we live, and move, and have our being***— He is the very source of our existence: the principle of life comes from him: the principle of motion, also, comes from him; one of the most difficult things in nature to be properly apprehended; and a strong proof of the continual presence and energy of the Deity.

***And have our being***— **καὶ ἐσμεν**, And we are: we live in him, move in him, and are in him. Without him we not only can do nothing, but without him we are nothing. We are, i.e. we continue to be, because of his continued, present, all-pervading, and supporting energy. There is a remarkable saying in Synopsis Sohar, p. 104. “The holy blessed God never does evil to any man. He only withdraws his gracious presence from him, and then he necessarily perisheth.” This is philosophical and correct.

***As certain also of your own poets***— Probably he means not only Aratus, in whose poem, entitled Phaenomena, the words quoted by St. Paul are to be found *literatim*, **τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν**; but also Cleanthus, in whose Hymn to Jupiter the same words (**ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμεν**) occur. But the sentiment is found in several others, being very common among the more enlightened philosophers. By saying your own poets, he does not mean poets born at Athens, but merely Grecian poets, Aratus and Cleanthus being chief.

***We are also his offspring.***— **τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν** The Phaenomena of Aratus, in which these words are found, begins thus: —

ἐκ δῖος ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδεποτ' ἀνδρες ἐώμεν  
ἀρρητον· μέσται δὲ δῖος πασαι μὲν ἀγυῖαι,  
πασαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραὶ· μέσθῃ δὲ θάλασσα,  
καὶ λεμένες· παντὴ δὲ δῖος κεκρημέθα πάντες·  
τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν· ὁδ' ἠπίος ἀνθρώποισι  
δεξιά σημαίνει. κ. τ. λ.

With Jove we must begin; nor from him rove;

*Him always praise, for all is full of Jove!  
He fills all places where mankind resort,  
The wide-spread sea, with every shelt'ring port.  
Jove's presence fills all space, upholds this ball;  
All need his aid; his power sustains us all.  
For we his offspring are; and he in love  
Points out to man his labor from above:  
Where signs unerring show when best the soil,*

*By well-timed culture, shall repay our toil, etc., etc.*

Aratus was a Cilician, one of St. Paul's own countrymen, and with his writings St. Paul was undoubtedly well acquainted, though he had flourished about 300 years before that time.

**Verse 29. *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God***, etc.— This inference of the apostle was very strong and conclusive; and his argument runs thus: “If we are the offspring of God, he cannot be like those images of gold, silver, and stone, which are formed by the art and device of man; for the parent must resemble his offspring. Seeing, therefore, that we are living and intelligent beings, HE from whom we have derived that being must be living and intelligent. It is necessary, also, that the object of religious worship should be much more excellent than the worshipper; but a man is, by innumerable degrees, more excellent than an image made out of gold, silver, or stone; and yet it would be impious to worship a man: how much more so to worship these images as gods! Every man in the Areopagus must have felt the power of this conclusion; and, taking it for granted that they had felt it, he proceeds: —

**Verse 30. *The times of this ignorance God winked at***— He who has an indisputable right to demand the worship of all his creatures has mercifully overlooked those acts of idolatry which have disgraced the world and debased man; but now, as he has condescended to give a revelation of himself, he commands, as the sovereign, all men every where, over every part of his dominions, to repent, *μετανοειν*, to change their views, designs, and practices; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness; and, as justice will then be done, no sinner, no persevering idolater, shall escape punishment.

The word *υπεριδειν*, which we translate, to wink at, signifies simply to look over; and seems to be here used in the sense of passing by, not particularly noticing it. So God overlooked, or passed by, the times of heathenish ignorance: as he had not given them the talent of Divine revelation, so he did not require the improvement of that talent; but now, as he had given them that revelation, he would no longer overlook, or pass by, their ignorance or its fruits.

**Verse 31. *He hath appointed a day***— He has fixed the time in which he will judge the world, though he has not revealed this time to man.

***By that man whom he hath ordained***— He has also appointed the judge, by whom the inhabitants of the earth are to be tried.

***Whereof he hath given assurance***— *πιστιν παρασχων πασι*, Having given to all this indubitable proof, that Jesus Christ shall judge the world, by raising him from the dead. The sense of the argument is this: “Jesus Christ, whom we preach as the Savior of men, has repeatedly told his followers that he would judge the world; and has described to us, at large, the whole of the proceedings of that awful time, Matthew 25:31, etc.; John 5:25. Though he was put to death by the Jews, and thus he became a victim for sin, yet God raised him from the dead. By raising him from the dead, God has set his seal to the doctrines he has taught: one of these doctrines is, that he shall judge the world; his resurrection, established by the most incontrovertible evidence, is therefore a proof, an incontestable proof, that he shall judge the world, according to his own declaration.”

**Verse 32. *When they heard of the resurrection***, etc.— Paul undoubtedly had not finished his discourse: it is likely that he was about to have proclaimed salvation through Christ crucified; but, on hearing of the resurrection of the body, the assembly instantly broke up; the Epicureans mocking, *εχλευαζον*, began to laugh; and the Stoics saying they would take another opportunity to hear him on that subject. And thus the assembly became dissolved before the apostle had time to finish his discourse, or to draw all the conclusions he had designed from the premises he had laid down. St. Stephen’s discourse was interrupted in a similar manner. See Acts 7:54, and the note there.

**Verse 33. *So Paul departed from among them***.— He could not be convicted of having done any thing contrary to the law; and, when the assembly broke up, he was permitted to go about his own business.

**Verse 34. *Certain men clave unto him***— Became affectionately united to him, and believed the doctrines he had preached.

***Dionysius the Areopagite***— There can be no doubt that this man was one of the judges of this great court, but whether the president or otherwise we cannot tell. Humanly speaking, his conversion must have been an

acquisition of considerable importance to the Christian religion; for no person was a judge in the Areopagus who had not borne the office of archon, or chief governor of the city; and none bore the office of judge in this court who was not of the highest reputation among the people for his intelligence and exemplary conduct. In some of the popish writers we find a vast deal of groundless conjecture concerning Dionysius, who, they say, was first bishop of Athens, and raised to that dignity by Paul himself; that he was a martyr for the truth; that Damaris was his wife, etc., etc., concerning which the judicious Calmet says, *Tout cela est de peu d'autorite*. "All this has little foundation."

1. IN addition to what has been said in the notes on this subject, I may add, the original word **δεισιδαμονεστερος**, from **δειδω**, I fear, and **δαμων**, a demon, signifies, "greatly addicted to the worship of the invisible powers;" for, as the word **δαμων** signifies either a good or evil spirit, and **δειδω**, I fear, signifies not only to fear in general, but also to pay religious reverence, the word must be here taken in its best sense; and so undoubtedly St. Paul intended it should; and so, doubtless, his audience understood him; for it would have been very imprudent to have charged them with superstition, which must have been extremely irritating, in the very commencement of a discourse in which he was to defend himself, and prove the truth of the Christian religion. He stated a fact, acknowledged by the best Greek writers; and he reasoned from that fact. The fact was that the Athenians were the most religious people in Greece, or, in other words, the most idolatrous: that there were in that city more altars, temples, sacrifices, and religious services, than in any other place. And independently of the authorities which may be quoted in support of this assertion, we may at once perceive the probability of it from the consideration that Athens was the grand university of Greece: that here philosophy and every thing relating to the worship of the gods was taught; and that religious services to the deities must be abundant. Look at our own universities of Oxford and Cambridge; here are more prayers, more religious acts and services, than in any other places in the nation, and very properly so. These were founded to be seminaries of learning and religion; and their very statutes suppose religion to be essential to learning; and their founders were in general religious characters, and endowed them for religious purposes. These, therefore, are not superstitious services; for, as

superstition signifies “unnecessary fears or scruples in religion; observance of unnecessary and uncommanded rites or practices,”-JOHNSON, it cannot be said of those services which are founded on the positive command of God, for the more effectual help to religious feelings, or as a preventive of immoral practices. I consider the Athenians, therefore, acting in conformity to their own laws and religious institutions; and Paul grants that they were much addicted to religious performances: this he pays as a compliment, and then takes occasion to show that their religion was defective: they had not a right object of devotion; they did not know the true God; the true God was to them the unknown God; and this an altar in their own city acknowledged. He therefore began to declare that glorious Being to them whom they ignorantly worshipped. As they were greatly addicted to religious services, and acknowledged that there was a Being to them unknown, and to whom they thought it necessary to erect an altar, they must, consistently with their character as a religious people, and with their own concession in the erection of this altar, hear quietly, patiently, and candidly, a discourse on that God whose being they acknowledged, but whose nature they did not know. Thus St. Paul, by acknowledging their religious disposition, and seizing the fact of the altar being inscribed to the unknown God, assumed a right which not a philosopher, orator, or judge in the Areopagus could dispute, of bringing the whole subject of Christianity before them, as he was now brought to his trial, and put on his defense. The whole of this fine advantage, this grand stroke of rhetorical prudence, is lost from the whole account, by our translation, ye are in all things too superstitious, thus causing the defendant to commence his discourse with a charge which would have roused the indignation of the Greeks, and precluded the possibility of their hearing any thing he had to say in defense of his conduct.

2. That the original word, on the right interpretation of which I have laid so much stress, is taken in a good sense, and signifies religious worship and reverence, I shall show by several proofs; some of which may be seen in Mr. Parkhurst, under the word **δεισιδαιμονια**, which Suidas explains by **ευλαβεια περι το θειον**, reverence towards the Deity. And Hesychius, by **φοβοθεια**, the fear of God. “In this good sense it is often used by Diodorus Siculus. Herodotus says of Orpheus, he led men, **εις δεισιδαιμονιαν**, to be religious; and exhorted them, **επι το ευσεβειν**, to

piety; where it is manifest that **δεισιδαιμονια** must mean religion, and not superstition. But, what is more to the present purpose, the word is used by Josephus, not only where a heathen calls the pagan religion **δεισιδαιμονιας**, (Antiq. lib. xix. cap. 5. s. 3,) or where the Jewish religion is spoken of by this name, in several edicts that were made in its favor by the Romans, (as in Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 10, s. 13, 14, 16, 18, 19,) but also where the historian is expressing his own thoughts in his own words: thus, of King Manasseh, after his repentance and restoration, he says, **εσπουδαζεν παση περι αυτον (θεον) τη δεισιδαιδαιμονια χρησθαι**, he endeavored to behave in the MOST RELIGIOUS manner towards God. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 3, s. 2. And, speaking of a riot that happened among the Jews on occasion of a Roman soldier's burning the book of the law, he observes that the Jews were drawn together on this occasion, **τη δεισιδαιμονια**, by their religion, as if it had been by an engine; **οργανω τινη**.-De Bell. lib. ii. cap. 12, s. 2." It would be easy to multiply examples of this use of the word; but the reader may refer, if necessary, to Wetstein, Pearce, and others.

3. That the Athenians were reputed, in this respect, a devout people, the following quotations may prove. Pausanias, in Attic. cap. xvii. p. 39, edit. Kuhn., says that the Athenians were not only more humane, **αλλα και ες θεους ευσεβειν**, but more devout towards the gods; and again he says, **δηλα τε εναργως, οσοις πλεον τι ετερων ευσεβειας μετεστιν**, it appears plainly how much they exceed others in the worship of the gods; and, in cap. xxiv. p. 56, he says, **αθηνιοις περισσοτερον τι, η τοις αλλοις, ες τα θεια εστι σπουδης**, that the Athenians are abundantly more solicitous about Divine matters than others. And Josephus seals this testimony by the assertion, contr. Apion, ii. 10: **αθηναιους ευσεβεστατους των 'ελληνων παντες λεγουσι**; Every body says that the Athenians are the most religious people of all the Greeks.-See Bp. Pearce. From all these authorities it is palpable that St. Paul must have used the term in the sense for which I have contended.

4. In the preceding notes, I have taken for granted that Paul was brought to the Areopagus to be tried on the charge of setting forth strange gods. Bp. Warburton denies that he was brought before the Areopagus on any charge whatever; and that he was taken there that the judges might hear him explain his doctrine, and not to defend himself against a charge which he



does not once notice in the whole of his discourse. But there is one circumstance that the bishop has not noticed, viz. that St. Paul was not permitted to finish his discourse, and therefore could not come to those particular parts of the charge brought against him which the bishop thinks he must have taken up most pointedly, had he been accused, and brought there to make his defense. The truth is, we have little more than the apostle's exordium, as he was evidently interrupted in the prosecution of his defense. As to the supposition that he was brought by philosophers to the Areopagus, that they might the better hear him explain his doctrine, it appears to have little ground; for they might have heard him to as great advantage in any other place: nor does it appear that this court was ever used, except for the solemn purposes of justice. But the question, whether Paul was brought to the Areopagus that he might be tried by the judges of that court, Bishop Pearce answers with his usual judgment and discrimination. He observes: "We are told that one effect of his preaching was, that he converted Dionysius the Areopagite, Acts 17:34; and this seems to show that he, who was a judge of that court, was present, and, if so, probably other judges were present also. 2. If they who brought Paul to Areopagus wanted only to satisfy their curiosity, they had an opportunity of doing that in the market, mentioned Acts 17:17. Why then did they remove him to another place? 3. When it is said that they brought Paul to Areopagus, it is said that they took him, *επιλαβομενοι αυτοι*, or rather, they laid hold on him, as the Greek word is translated, Luke 23:26; 20:20, 26, and as it ought to have been here, in Acts 21:30, 33, and especially in this latter verse. 4. It is observable that Paul, in his whole discourse at the Areopagus, did not make the least attempt to move the passions of his audience, as he did when speaking to Felix, Acts 24:25, and to Agrippa, Acts 26:29; but he used plain and grave reasonings to convince his hearers of the soundness of his doctrine.

"Now, we are told by Quintilian, in *Inst. Orat.* ii. 16, that Athenis actor movere affectus vetabatur: the actor was forbidden to endeavor to excite the passions. And again, in vi. 1, that Athenis affectus movere etiam per praeconem prohibebatur orator: among the Athenians, the orator was prohibited by the public crier to move the passions of his auditory. And this is confirmed by Philostratus in *procem. lib. i. de Vit. Sophist.*; and by Athenaeus, in *Deipnosoph.* xiii. 6. If, therefore, it was strictly forbidden at



Athens to move the affections of the courts of justice, especially in that of the Areopagus, we see a good reason why Paul made no attempt in that way; and, at the same time, we learn how improperly the painters have done all they could, when they represent Paul speaking at Athens, endeavoring both by his looks and gestures to raise those several passions in his hearers which their faces are meant to express.”

I have only to add here, that, though St. Paul did not endeavor to excite any passions in his address at the Areopagus, yet each sect of the philosophers would feel themselves powerfully affected by every thing in his discourse which tended to show the emptiness or falsity of their doctrines; and, though he attempted to move no passions, yet, from these considerations, their passions would be strongly moved. And this is the idea which the inimitable Raphael took up in his celebrated cartoon on this subject, and which his best copier, Mr. Thomas Holloway, has not only engraved to the life, but has also described in language only inferior to the cartoon itself; and, as it affords no mean comment on the preceding discourse, my readers will be pleased to find it here.

By the cartoons of Raphael, we are to understand certain Scripture pieces painted by Raphael d’Urbino, and now preserved in the palace at Hampton court. They are allowed to be the chefs d’oeuvre in their kind. They have been often engraved, but never so as to give an adequate representation of the matchless originals, till Mr. Thomas Holloway, who has completely seized the spirit of the artist, undertook this most laborious work, in which he has been wholly engaged for several years; and in which he has, for some time past, associated with himself Messrs. Slann and Webb, two excellent artists, who had formerly been his own pupils. The cartoon to which I have referred has been some time finished, and delivered to the subscribers; and with it that elegant description, from which the following is a copious extract: —

“The eye no sooner glances on this celebrated cartoon than it is immediately struck with the commanding attitude of the speaker, and the various emotions excited in his hearers.

“The interest which the first appearance of St. Paul at Athens had occasioned, was not calculated to subside on a sudden; his doctrines were too new, and his zeal too ardent. From the multitude it ascended to the

philosophers. The Epicureans and Stoics particularly assailed him. Antecedently to the scene described in the picture, among the various characters already encountered by the apostle, many undoubtedly, in their speculations upon Divine subjects, had often imagined a sublimer religion than that commonly acknowledged: such, therefore, would make it their business to hear him again. Others, to whom truth was of less value than the idle amusement of vain disquisition, felt no other motive than curiosity. By far the greater part, however, obstinately bigoted to their particular tenets, and abhorring innovation, regarded him as impious, or a mere babbler: these also wished to hear him again, but with no other than the insidious view, that, by a more regular and explicit profession of his doctrines, he might expose his own absurdities, or render himself obnoxious to the state. The drapery accords with the majesty of the figure; and the light is so managed, especially on the arms and hands, as greatly to assist the energy of the action.

“The painter has proceeded, from the warmth of full conviction, through various gradations, to the extremes of malignant prejudice, and invincible bigotry.

“In the foreground, on the right, is Dionysius, who is recorded to have embraced the new religion. With the utmost fervor in his countenance, and with a kind of sympathetic action and unconscious eagerness, he advances a step nearer. His eye is fixed on the apostle: he longs to tell him his conversion, already perhaps preceded by conviction wrought in his mind by the reasonings of the sacred teacher on previous occasions, in the synagogue, and in the forum or marketplace. He appears not only touched with the doctrine he receives, but expresses an evident attachment to his instructor: he would become his host and protector.

“This figure is altogether admirable. The gracefulness of the drapery and of the hair; the masculine beauty of the features; the perspective drawing of the arms; the life and sentiment of the hands, the right one especially, are inimitable.

“Behind is Damaris, mentioned with him as a fellow believer. This is the only female in the composition; but the painter has fully availed himself of the character, in assisting his principle of contrast; an excellence found in all the works of Raphael. Her discreet distance, her modest deportment,

her pious and diffident eye, discovering a degree of awe, the decorum and arrangement of her train, all interest the mind in her favor.

“Next to these, but at some distance, is a Stoic. The first survey of this figure conveys the nature of his peculiar philosophy—dignity and austerity. Raphael has well understood what he meant in this instance to illustrate. His head is sunk in his breast; his arms are mechanically folded; his eyes, almost shut, glance towards the ground: he is absorbed in reflection. In spite of his stoicism, discomposure and perplexity invade his soul, mixed with a degree of haughty mortification.

“Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed that ‘the same idea is continued through the whole figure, even to the drapery, which is so closely muffled about him that even his hands are not seen;’ and that, ‘by this happy correspondence between the expression of the countenance and the disposition of the parts, the figure appears to think from head to foot.’

“Behind the Stoic are two young men, well contrasted in expression: anger in the elder, and in the other, youthful pride, half abashed, are finely discriminated.

“Beyond, in the same continued half circle with the Stoic, is perhaps exhibited the most astonishing contrast ever imagined; that of inexorable sternness, and complete placidity.

“Of the two figures, the first is denominated a Cynic, who, disappointed in his expectation of the ridiculous appearance which he conceived the apostle, when confronted, would make among them, abandons his mind to rage. His formidable forehead concentrates its whole expression: with a fixed frown and threatening eye, he surveys the object of his indignation. He alone would engage to confute him, or punish his temerity. His eager impatience and irritation are not discovered in his features only; he raises his heel from the ground, and leans with a firmer pressure on his crutch, which seems to bend beneath him.

“Pass from him to the more polished Epicurean. This figure exhibits perfect repose of body and mind: no passions agitate the one; no action discomposes the other. His hands, judiciously concealed beneath beautiful drapery, shows there can be no possible motion or employment for them. His feet seem to sleep upon the ground. His countenance, which is highly

pleasing, and full of natural gentleness, expresses only a smile of pity at the fancied errors of the apostle, mingled with delight derived from his eloquence. He waits, with an inclined head, in passive and serene expectation. If a shrewd intelligence is discovered in his eyes, it is too gentle to disturb the general expression of tranquillity.

“Behind are two other young men: the first discovers a degree of superciliousness with his vexation; his companion is more disgusted, and more morose.

“These, and the two young figures previously described, are not introduced merely to fill up the group; they may be intended as pupils to the philosophers before them, though by some considered as young Romans, who have introduced themselves from ennui or curiosity.

“Beyond is a character in whose mind the force of truth and eloquence appears to have produced conviction; but pride, vanity, or self-interest, impel him to dissemble. His finger, placed upon the upper lip, shows that he has imposed silence upon himself.

“In the centre is seated a group from the academy. The skill of Raphael in this instance is eminent. These figures are not only thrown into shade, to prevent their interference with the principal figure; but, from their posture, they contribute to its elevation, and at the same time vary the line of the standing group.

“It seems as if the old philosopher in profile, on the left, had offered some observations on the apostle’s address; and that he was eagerly listening to the reply of his sage friend, in whose features we behold more of the spirit of mild philosophy. The action of his fingers denotes his habit of reasoning, and regularity of argument. The middle figure behind appears to be watching the effect which his remarks would produce.

“The action of the young man, pointing to the apostle, characterizes the keen susceptibility and impetuosity of his age. His countenance expresses disgust, approaching to horror. The other young man turns his head round, as though complaining of unreasonable interruption. The drapery of both the front figures in this group is finely drawn: the opening action of the knees in the one is beautifully followed and described by the folds; in the

other, the compression, in consequence of the bent attitude, is equally executed; the turn of the head gives grace and variety to the figure.

“The head introduced beyond, and rather apart, is intended to break the two answering lines of the dark contour of the apostle’s drapery, and the building in the background.

“In the group placed behind the apostle, the mind is astonished at the new character of composition. The finest light imaginable is thrown upon the sitting figure; and, as necessary, a mass of shade is cast upon the two others.

“It is difficult to ascertain what or whom Raphael meant by that corpulent and haughty personage wearing the cap. His expression, however, is evident: malice and vexation are depicted in his countenance; his stride, and the action of his hand, are characteristic of his temperament.

“The figure standing behind is supposed to be a magician. His dark hair and beard, which seem to have been neglected, and the keen mysterious gaze of his eye, certainly exhibit a mind addicted to unusual studies. Under him, the only remaining figure is one who listens with malignant attention, as though intending to report every thing. He has the aspect of a spy. His eye is full of danger to the apostle; and he crouches below that he may not be disturbed by communication.

“If this figure be considered with reference to Dionysius, it may be remarked that Raphael has not only contrasted his characters, but even the two ends of his picture. By this means the greatest possible force is given to the subject. At the first survey, the subordinate contrasts may escape the eye, but these greater oppositions must have their effect.

“When, from this detailed display of the cartoon, the eye again glances over the whole subject, including the dignity of the architecture; the propriety of the statue of Mars, which faces his temple; the happy management of the landscape, with the two conversation figures; the result must be an acknowledgment that in this one effort of art is combined all that is great in drawing, in expression, and in composition.” Holloway’s description of Raphael’s Cartoon of Paul preaching at Athens.

## CHAPTER 18.

*Paul, leaving Athens, comes to Corinth, meets with Aquila and Priscilla, and labors with them at tent-making, 1-3. He preaches, and proves that Jesus was the Christ, 4, 5. The Jews oppose and blaspheme; and he purposes to go to the Gentiles, 6. Justus, Crispus, and several of the Corinthians believe, 7, 8. Paul has a vision, by which he is greatly comforted, 9, 10. He continues there a year and six months, 11. Gallio being deputy of Achaia, the Jews make insurrection against Paul, and bring him before the deputy, who dismisses the cause; whereupon the Jews commit a variety of outrages, 12-17. Paul sails to Syria, and from thence to Ephesus, where he preaches, 18-20. He leaves Ephesus-goes to Caesarea, visits Antioch, Galatia, and Phrygia, 21-23. Account of Apollos and his preaching, 24-28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 18.

**Verse 1.** *Paul departed from Athens*— How long he stayed here, we cannot tell; it is probable it could not be less than three months; but, finding that the Gospel made little progress among the Athenians, he resolved to go to Corinth.

CORINTH was situated on the isthmus that connects Peloponnesus to Attica; and was the capital of all Achaia, or Peloponnesus. It was most advantageously situated for trade; for, by its two ports, the Lecheum and Cenchreae, it commanded the commerce both of the Ionian and Aegean Sea. It was destroyed by the Romans under Mummius, about one hundred and forty-six years before Christ, in their wars with Attica; but was rebuilt by Julius Caesar, and became one of the most considerable cities of Greece. Like other kingdoms and states, it has undergone a variety of revolutions: from the oppressive and destructive government of the Turks it has been lately restored to that of the Greeks; but it is greatly reduced, its whole population amounting only to between thirteen and fourteen thousand souls. It is about 46 miles east of Athens, and 342 S.W. of Constantinople.

Its public buildings were very superb; and there the order called the Corinthian Order, in architecture, took its rise.

**Verse 2. *A certain Jew named Aquila***— Some have supposed that this Aquila was the same with the Onkelos, mentioned by the Jews. See the article in Wolfius, *Bibl. Hebr.* vol. ii. p. 1147. We have no evidence that this Jew and his wife were at this time converted to the Christian religion. Their conversion was most likely the fruit of St. Paul's lodging with them-Pontus. See the note on Acts 2:9.

***Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome***— This edict of the Roman emperor is not mentioned by Josephus; but it is probably the same to which Suetonius refers in his life of Claudius; where he says, *Judeos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit.* “He expelled the Jews from Rome, as they were making continual insurrections, under their leader Chrestus.” Who this Chrestus was we cannot tell; probably Suetonius means Christ; but this I confess does not appear to me likely. There might have been a Jew of the name of Chrestus, who had made some disturbances, and, in consequence, Claudius thought proper to banish all Jews from the city. But how could he intend Christ, who was never at Rome? nor did any one ever personate him in that city; and it is evident he could not refer to any spiritual influence exerted by Christ on the minds of the people. Indeed he speaks of Chrestus as being the person who was the cause of the disturbances. It is no fictitious name, no name of an absent person, nor of a sect; but of one who was well known by the disturbances which he occasioned, and for which it is likely he suffered, and those of his nation were expelled. This decree, which was made, not by the senate, but by the emperor himself, continued only in force during his life, if so long; for in a short time after this Rome again abounded with Jews.

**Verse 3. *He abode with them, and wrought***— Bp. Pearce observes that it was a custom among the Jews, even of such as had a better education than ordinary, which was Paul's case, Acts 22:3, to learn a trade, that, wherever they were, they might provide for themselves in case of necessity. And though Paul, in some cases, lived on the bounty of his converts, yet he chose not to do so at Ephesus, Acts 20:34; nor at Corinth or other places, 1 Corinthians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 9:8, 9; 1 Thessalonians 3:8; and this Paul

did for a reason which he gives in 2 Corinthians 11:9-12. While he was at Corinth he was supplied, when his own labor did not procure him enough, “by the brethren which came to him there from Macedonia.” It appears that the apostle had his lodging with Aquila and Priscilla; and probably a portion of the profits of the business, after his board was deducted. It was evidently no reproach for a man, at that time, to unite public teaching with an honest useful trade. And why should it be so now? May not a man who has acquired a thorough knowledge of the Gospel way of salvation, explain that way to his less informed neighbors, though he be a tent-maker, (what perhaps we would call a house-carpenter,) or a shoemaker, or any thing else? Even many of those who consider it a cardinal sin for a mechanic to preach the Gospel, are providing for themselves and their families in the same way. How many of the clergy, and other ministers, are farmers, graziers, schoolmasters, and sleeping partners in different trades and commercial concerns! A tent-maker, in his place, is as useful as any of these. Do not ridicule the mechanic because he preaches the Gospel to the salvation of his neighbors, lest some one should say, in a language which you glory to have learned, and which the mechanic has not, *Mutato nomine, de TE fabula narrator.*

There are different opinions concerning that is meant here by the **σκηνοποιος**, which we translate tent-maker. Some think it means a maker of those small portable tents, formed of skins, which soldiers and travelers usually carried with them on their journeys; others suppose that these tents were made of linen cloth. Some think that the trade of St. Paul was making hangings or curtains, such as were used at the theatres; others think the **σκηνοποιος** was a sort of umbrella-maker; others, a weaver, etc., etc. In short, we know not what the trade was. I have generally preferred the notion of a carpenter, or *faber lignarius*. Whatever it was, it was an honest, useful calling, and Paul got his bread by it.

**Verse 4. *He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath***— Discoursed at large concerning Jesus as the Messiah, proving this point from their own Scriptures, collated with the facts of our Lord’s life, etc.

***And persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.***— Many, both Jews and proselytes, were convinced of the truth of his doctrine. Among his converts was Epenetus, the first fruit of his labor in Achaia, Romans 16:5;



and the family of Stephanas was the next; and then Crispus and Caius, or Gaius; all of whom the apostle himself baptized, 1 Corinthians 1:14-16. See on Acts 18:8.

**Verse 5. *When Silas and Timotheus were come***— We have seen, Acts 17:13, that when Paul was obliged to leave Berea, because of the persecution raised up against him in that place, he left Silas and Timotheus behind; to whom he afterwards sent word to rejoin him at Athens with all speed. It appears, from 1 Thessalonians 3:10, that, on Timothy's coming to Athens, Paul immediately sent him, and probably Silas with him, to comfort and establish the Church at Thessalonica. How long they labored here is uncertain, but they did not rejoin him till some time after he came to Corinth. It appears that he was greatly rejoiced at the account which Timothy brought of the Church at Thessalonica; and it must have been immediately after this that he wrote his first epistle to that Church, which is probably the first, in order of time, of all his epistles.

***Paul was pressed in spirit***— *συνειχέτο τῷ πνεύματι*, or he was constrained by the Spirit of God, in an extraordinary manner, to testify to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. Instead of *τῷ πνεύματι*, in the spirit, *τῷ λόγῳ*, in the word or doctrine, is the reading of ABDE, three others; both the Syriac, Coptic, Vulgate, Basil, Chrysostom, and others. Griesbach has received this reading into the text, and Bp. Pearce thus paraphrases the verse: "And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul set himself, together with them, wholly to the word; i.e. he was fully employed, now that he had their assistance, it preaching the Gospel, called the word in Acts 4:4; 16:6, 32; 17:11. St. Luke seems to have intended to express here something relating to St. Paul which was the consequence of the coming of Silas and Timotheus; and that was rather labouring with them more abundantly in preaching the word than his being "pressed in spirit." This appears to be the true sense of the word, and that *τῷ λόγῳ* is the genuine reading there can be no doubt. *συνειχέτο*, which we translate pressed, and which the Vulgate translates instabat, Bp. Pearce thinks should be translated *una cum illis instabat*, he earnestly strove together with them, *τῷ λόγῳ*, in preaching the word. The true sense is given by Calmet, Paul s'employoit a precher encore avec plus d'ardeur, Paul was employed with more ardour in preaching, and testifying to the Jews that

Jesus was the Christ. From this time we hear no more of Silas; probably he died in Macedonia.

**Verse 6. *When they opposed***— *αντιτασσομενων*, Systematically opposing, putting themselves in warlike order against him: so the word implies.

***And blasphemed***— This is precisely the way in which they still act. They have no arguments against Jesus being the Messiah; but, having made a covenant with unbelief, as soon as they are pressed on this point, they rail and blaspheme.—See the *Tela ignea Satanae*, by Wagenseil.

***He shook his raiment***— This was an action similar to that of shaking the dust of the feet; see on Matthew 10:14. See a parallel act, and its signification, in Nehemiah 5:13: Also I SHOOK MY LAP, and said, So shall God SHAKE every man FROM HIS HOUSE and FROM his LABOR; even thus shall he be SHAKEN OUT and EMPTIED. St. Paul's act on this occasion seems to have been the same with this of Nehemiah, and with the same signification; and it is likely that he was led by a Divine impulse to do it—thus signifying the shaking and emptying out of this disobedient people, which took place about sixteen years afterwards.

***Your blood be upon your own heads***— That is, ye alone are the cause of the destruction that is coming upon yourselves and upon your country.

***I am clean***— *καθαρος εγω*, I am pure or innocent of your death and ruin. I have proposed to you the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the only means by which ye can be saved, and ye have utterly rejected it. I shall labor no more with you; and, from henceforth, shall confine my labors to the Gentiles. St. Paul must refer to the Jews and Gentiles of Corinth particularly; for he preached to the Jews occasionally in other places; see Acts 19:8, 9; and several were brought to the knowledge of the truth. But it seems as if the Jews from this time systematically opposed the Gospel of Christ; and yet, general tenders of this salvation were made to them wherever the apostles came; and when they rejected them, the word was sent to the Gentiles; see Acts 19:8, 9.

Pure from blood, or pure from guilt, is commonly expressed by *καθαρος*; thus Heliodorus, lib. i. p. 49: *εις δευρο διετελεσα καθαραν εμαυτην απο της ομιλιας φυλαττουσα*, Until now I have lived, preserving

myself pure: and Alciphron, lib. i. epist. 7, ad. fin.: ουδε μιαναι λυθρωτας χειρας, ας η θαλαττα εκ παιδος εις δευρο καθαρας αδικηματων εφυλαξε, Nor to stain with pollution the hands which a seafaring life has kept from a child until now pure from iniquity.

**Verse 7. *And he departed thence***— From his former lodging, or that quarter of the city where he had dwelt before with Aquila and Priscilla; and went to lodge with Justus, apparently a proselyte of the gate. This person is called Titus, and Titus Justus, in several MSS. and versions.

**Verse 8. *Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue***— This person held an office of considerable consequence; and therefore his conversion to Christianity must have been very galling to the Jews. It belonged to the chief or ruler of the synagogue to preside in all the assemblies, interpret the law, decide concerning things lawful and unlawful, punish the refractory, excommunicate the rebellious, solemnize marriages, and issue divorces. It is likely that, on the conversion of Crispus, Sosthenes was chosen to succeed him.

***Many of the Corinthians***— Those to whom the sacred historian refers were probably Gentiles, and were the fruits of the apostle's labors after he had ceased to preach among the Jews.

**Verse 9. *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision***— It is likely that Paul was at this time much discouraged by the violent opposition of the Jews, and probably was in danger of his life; see Acts 18:10; and might have been entertaining serious thoughts of ceasing to preach, or leaving Corinth. To prevent this, and comfort him, God was pleased to give him this vision.

***Be not afraid***— That this comfort and assurance were necessary himself shows us in his first epistle to these Corinthians, Acts 2:3: I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

**Verse 10. *No man shall set on thee***— και ουδεις επιθησεται σοι, No man shall be permitted to lay violent hands upon thee. It is very likely that the Jews had conspired his death; and his preservation was an act of the especial interposition of Divine Providence.

*I have much people in this city.*— εν τη πολει ταυτη, In this very city: there are many here who have not resisted my Spirit, and consequently are now under its teachings, and are ready to embrace my Gospel as soon as thou shalt declare it unto them.

**Verse 11.** *He continued there a year and six months*— He was now confident that he was under the especial protection of God, and therefore continued teaching the word, τον λογον, the doctrine of God. It is very likely, that it was during his stay here that he wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians, and the second not long after; and some think that the epistle to the Galatians was written during his stay at Corinth.

**Verse 12.** *When Gallio was the deputy of Achaia*— The Romans comprehended, under the name of Achaia, all that part of Greece which lay between Thessaly and the southernmost coasts of Peloponnesus. Pausanias, in Attic. vii. 16, says that the Romans were accustomed to send a governor into that country, and that they called him the governor of Achaia, not of Greece; because the Achaeans, when they subdued Greece, were the leaders in all the Grecian affairs see also Suetonius, in his life of Claudius, cap. xxv., and Dio Cassius, lx. 24. Edit. Reimari.

*Deputy*— ανθυπατευοντος, serving the office of ανθυπατος, or deputy: see the note on Acts 13:7.

*Gallio*— This deputy, or proconsul, was eldest brother to the celebrated Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the stoic philosopher, preceptor of Nero, and who is so well known among the learned by his works. The name of Gallio, was at first Marcus Annaeus Novatus; but, having been adopted in the family of Gallio, he took the name of Lucius Junius Gallio. He, and Annaeus Mela his brother, father of the poet Lucan, shared in the disgrace of their brother Seneca; and by this tyrant, Nero, whose early years were so promising, the three brothers were put to death; see Tacitus, Annal. lib. xv. 70, and xvi. 17. It was to this Gallio that Seneca dedicates his book Deuteronomy Ira. Seneca describes him as a man of the most amiable mind and manners: “Quem nemo non parum amat, etiam qui amare plus non potent; nemo mortalium uni tam dulcis est, quam hic omnibus: cum interim tanta naturalis boni vis est, uti artem simulationemque non redoleat.” vide Senec. Praefat. ad Natural. Quaest. 4. He was of the sweetest disposition, affable to all, and beloved by every man.

Stattius, Sylvar. lib. ii. 7. ver. 30, Ode on the Birthday of Lucan, says not a little in his favor, in a very few words: —

*Lucanum potes imputare terris;  
Hoc plus quam Senecam dedisse mundo,  
Aut dulcem generasse Gallionem.*

You may consider nature as having made greater efforts in producing Lucan, than it has done in producing Seneca, or even the amiable GALLIO.

***And brought him to the judgment seat***— They had no power to punish any person in the Roman provinces, and therefore were obliged to bring their complaint before the Roman governor. The powers that be are ordained of God. Had the Jews possessed the power here, Paul had been put to death!

**Verse 13. *Persuaded men to worship God contrary to the law.***— This accusation was very insidious. The Jews had permission by the Romans to worship their own God in their own way: this the laws allowed. The Roman worship was also established by the law. The Jews probably intended to accuse Paul of acting contrary to both laws. “He is not a Jew, for he does not admit of circumcision; he is not a Gentile, for he preaches against the worship of the gods. He is setting up a worship of his own, in opposition to all laws, and persuading many people to join with him: he is therefore a most dangerous man, and should be put to death.”

**Verse 14. *Paul was now about to open his mouth***— He was about to enter on his defense; but Gallio, perceiving that the prosecution was through envy and malice, would not put Paul to any farther trouble, but determined the matter as follows.

***If it were a matter of wrong***— *αδικημα*, Of injustice; any thing contrary to the rights of the subject.

***Or wicked lewdness***— *ραδιουργημα πονηρον*, Destructive mischief. (See the note on Acts 13:10, where the word is explained.) Something by which the subject is grievously wronged; were it any crime against society or against the state.

**Reason would that I should bear with you.**— *κατα λογον αν ηνεσχομην υμων*, According to reason, or the merit of the case, I should patiently hear you.

**Verse 15. *But if it be a question of words***— *περι λογου*, Concerning doctrine and names—whether the person called Jesus be the person you call the Messiah. And of your law—any particular nicety, concerning that law which is peculiar to yourselves: Look ye to it—settle the business among yourselves; the Roman government does not meddle with such matters, and I will not take upon me to—decide in a case that does not concern my office. As if he had said: “The Roman laws give religious liberty to Jews and Greeks; but, if controversies arise among you on these subjects, decide them among yourselves, or dispute about them as much as you please.” A better answer could not be given by man; and it was highly becoming the acknowledged meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of this amiable man. He concluded that the state had no right to control any man’s religious opinion; that was between the object of his worship and his own conscience; and therefore he was not authorized to intermeddle with subjects of this nature, which the law left to every man’s private judgment. Had all the rulers of the people in every country acted as this sensible and benevolent Roman, laws against liberty of conscience, concerning religious persecution, would not be found to be, as they not are, blots and disgraces on the statute books of almost all the civilized nations of Europe.

**Verse 16. *And he drave them from the judgment seat.***— He saw that their accusation was both frivolous and vexatious, and he ordered them to depart, and the assembly to disperse. The word *απηλασεν*, which we translate he drave, does not signify here any act of violence on the part of Gallio or the Roman officers, but simply an authoritative dismissal.

**Verse 17. *Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes***— As this man is termed the chief ruler of the synagogue, it is probable that he had lately succeeded Crispus in that office; see Acts 18:8; and that he was known either to have embraced Christianity, or to have favored the cause of St. Paul. He is supposed to be the same person whom St. Paul associates with himself in the first epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 1:1. Crispus might have been removed from his presidency in the synagogue as soon as the Jews found he had embraced Christianity, and Sosthenes appointed in his place.

And, as he seems to have speedily embraced the same doctrine, the Jews would be the more enraged, and their malice be directed strongly against him, when they found that the proconsul would not support them in their opposition to Paul.

But why should the Greeks beat Sosthenes? I have in the above note proceeded on the supposition that this outrage was committed by the Jews; and my reason for it is this: *οι Ἕλληνες*, the Greeks, is omitted by AB, two of the oldest and most authentic MSS. in the world: they are omitted also by the Coptic and Vulgate, Chrysostom, and Bede. Instead of *οι Ἕλληνες*, three MSS., one of the eleventh, and two of the thirteenth century, have *ιουδαιοι*, the Jews; and it is much more likely that the Jews beat one of their own rulers, through envy at his conversion, than that the Greeks should do so; unless we allow, which is very probable, (if *Ἕλληνες*, Greeks, be the true reading,) that these Hellenes were Jews, born in a Greek country, and speaking the Greek language.

*And Gallio cared for none of those things.*— *και ουδεν τουτων θω γαλλιωνι εμελεν*. And Gallio did not concern himself, did not intermeddle with any of these things. As he found that it was a business that concerned their own religion, and that the contention was among themselves, and that they were abusing one of their own sect only, he did not choose to interfere. He, like the rest of the Romans, considered the Jews a most despicable people, and worthy of no regard; and their present conduct had no tendency to cause him to form a different opinion of them from that which he and his countrymen had previously entertained. It is not very likely, however, that Gallio saw this outrage; for, though it was before the judgment seat, it probably did not take place till Gallio had left the court; and, though he might be told of it, he left the matter to the lictors, and would not interfere.

The conduct of Gallio has been, in this case, greatly censured; and I think with manifest injustice. In the business brought before his tribunal, no man could have followed a more prudent or equitable course. His whole conduct showed that it was his opinion, that the civil magistrate had nothing to do with religious opinions or the concerns of conscience, in matters where the safety of the state was not implicated. He therefore refused to make the subject a matter of legal discussion. Nay, he went

much farther; he would not even interfere to prevent either the Jews or the apostles from making proselytes. Though the complaint against the apostles was, that they were teaching men to worship God contrary to the law; see the note on Acts 18:15, yet, even in this case, he did not think it right to exert the secular power to restrain the free discussion and teaching of matters which concerned the rights of conscience in things pertaining to the worship of the gods. As to his not preventing the tumult which took place, we may sag, if he did see it, which is not quite evident, that he well knew that this could rise to no serious amount; and the lictors, and other minor officers, were there in sufficient force to prevent any serious riot, and it was their business to see that the public peace was not broken, besides, as a heathen, he might have no objection to permit this people to pursue a line of conduct by which they were sure to bring themselves and their religion into contempt. These wicked Jews could not disprove the apostle's doctrine, either by argument or Scripture; and they had recourse to manual logic, which was an indisputable proof of the badness of their own cause, and the strength of that of their opponents.

But in consequence of this conduct Gallio has been represented as a man perfectly careless and unconcerned about religion in general; and therefore has been considered as a proper type or representative of even professed Christians, who are not decided in their religious opinions or conduct. As a heathen, Gallio certainly was careless about both Judaism and Christianity. The latter he had probably never heard of but by the cause now before his judgment seat; and, from any thing he could see of the other, through the medium of its professors, he certainly could entertain no favorable opinion of it: therefore in neither case was he to blame. But the words, cared for none of those things, are both misunderstood and misapplied: we have already seen that they only mean that he would not intermeddle in a controversy which did not belong to his province and sufficient reasons have been alleged why he should act as he did. It is granted that many preachers take this for a text, and preach useful sermons for the conviction of the undecided and lukewarm; and it is to be deplored that there are so many undecided and careless people in the world, and especially in reference to what concerns their eternal interests. But is it not to be lamented, also, that there should be preachers of God's holy word who attempt to explain passages of Scripture which they do not understand.



For he who preaches on Gallio cared for none of those things, in the way in which the passage has, through mismanagement, been popularly understood, either does not understand it, or he willing perverts the meaning.

**Verse 18. *And Paul-tarried there yet a good while***— The persecuting Jews plainly saw, from the manner in which the proconsul had conducted this business, that they could have no hope of raising a state persecution against the apostles; and the laws provided so amply for the personal safety of every Roman citizen that then were afraid to proceed any farther in their violence. It would not be unknown that Paul was possessed of the right of Roman citizenship; and therefore his person was sacred as long as he did nothing contrary to the laws.

It is probable that at this time Paul stayed, on the whole, as Corinth, about two years.

***Having shorn his head in Cenchrea***— But who was it that shored his head? Paul or Aquila? Some think the latter, who had bound himself by the Nazarite vow, probably before he became a Christian; and, being under that vow, his conscience would not permit him to disregard it. There is nothing in the text that absolutely obliges us to understand this action as belonging to St. Paul. It seems to have been the act of Aquila alone; and therefore both Paul and Priscilla are mentioned before Aquila; and it is natural to refer the vow to the latter. Yet there are certainly some weighty reasons why the vow should be referred to St. Paul, and not to Aquila; and interpreters are greatly divided on the subject. Chrysostom, Isidore of Seville, Grotius, Hammond, Zegerus, Erasmus, Baronius, Pearce, Wesley, and others, refer the vow to Aquila.—Jerome, Augustin, Bede, Calmet, Dodd, Rosenmuller, and others, refer it to St. Paul. Each party has its strong reasons—the matter is doubtful—the bare letter of the text determines nothing: yet I cannot help leaning to the latter opinion. Perhaps it was from feeling the difficulty of deciding which was under the vow that the Aethiopic and two Latin versions, instead of *κειραμενος*, having shaved, in the singular, appear to have read *κειραμενοι*, they shaved; and thus put both Paul and Aquila under the vow.

Cenchrea. This was a port on the east side of the isthmus of Corinth, opposite to the Lecheum, which was the other port on the west.

And it is likely that it was at Cenchrea that St. Paul took shipping for Syria, as it would be more convenient for him, and a shorter passage to embark at Cenchrea, in order to go by the AEgean Sea to Syria, than to embark at the Lecheum, and sail down into the Mediterranean. This isthmus is generally described now as dividing the Gulf of Lepanto, on the west, from the Gulf of Engia, or Eginaon, on the east.

**Verse 19. *He came to Ephesus***— Where it appears he spent but one Sabbath. It is supposed that Paul left Aquila and Priscilla at this place, and that he went on alone to Jerusalem; for it is certain they were at Ephesus when Apollos arrived there. See Acts 18:24, 26.

EPHESUS was at the time in which St. Paul visited it, one of the most flourishing cities of Asia Minor. It was situated in that part anciently called Ionia, but now Natolia. It abounded with the most eminent orators, philosophers, etc., in the world; and was adorned with the most splendid buildings. Here was that famous temple of Diana, reputed one of the seven wonders of the world. This city is now under the dominion of the Turks, and is in a state of almost entire ruin. The temple of Minerva, which had long served as a Christian church, is now so completely ruined that its site cannot be easily determined; though some ruins of the walls are still standing, with five or six marble columns, forty feet in length, and seven in diameter, all of one piece. It still has a good harbour, and is about forty miles from Smyrna. In Chandler's Travels in Asia Minor, some curious information is given concerning this once eminent city. His account concludes thus: "The Ephesians are now a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility: the representative of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wrecks of their greatness: some beneath the vaults of the Stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions; and some live by the abrupt precipice, in the sepulchres which received the ashes of their ancestors. Such are the present citizens of Ephesus; and such is the condition to which that renowned city has been gradually reduced. Its streets are obscured and overgrown; a herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We

heard the partridge call in the area of the theater, and of the Stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no longer remembered; and Christianity, which was there nursed by apostles, and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fullness of stature, barely lingers on, in an existence hardly visible.” *Travels in Asia Minor*, p. 130. Reader! This city was once the capital of Asia Minor; and its ruins alone prove that it has existed: and it was one of those seven Churches to which a letter was expressly dictated by Jesus Christ himself! Ephesus is properly no more! and the Church of Ephesus is blotted put of the map of Christianity! Be silent and adore.

**Verse 21. *I must-keep this feast***— Most likely the passover, at which he wished to attend for the purpose of seeing many of his friends, and having the most favorable opportunity to preach the Gospel to thousands who would attend at Jerusalem on that occasion. The whole of this clause, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem, is wanting in ABE, six others; with the Coptic, AETHiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate. Griesbach leaves it in the text, with the mark of doubtfulness; and Professor White, in his *Crisews*, says, *probabiliter delenda*. Without this clause the verse will read thus: But he bade them farewell, saying, I will return again unto you, if God will. And this he did before the expiration of that same year, Acts 19:1, and spent three years with them, Acts 20:31, extending and establishing the Church at that place.

**Verse 22. *Landed at Caesarea***— This must have been Caesarea in Palestine.

***Gone up***— To Jerusalem, though the name is not mentioned: but this is a common form of speech in the evangelists, Jerusalem being always meant when this expression was used; for the word *αναβαινω*, to go up, is often used absolutely, to signify, to go to Jerusalem: e.g. GO ye UP unto this feast; I GO not UP yet, John 7:8. But when his brethren were GONE UP, then WENT he also UP unto the feast, John 7:10. There were certain Greeks-that CAME UP to worship, John 12:20. St. Paul himself uses a similar form of expression. There are yet but twelve days since I WENT UP to Jerusalem, for to worship, Acts 24:11. So all parts of England are spoken of as being below London: so we talk of going up to London; and people in London talk of going down to the country.

***Saluted the Church***— That is, the Church at Jerusalem, called emphatically THE CHURCH, because it was the FIRST Church—the MOTHER, or APOSTOLIC Church; and from it all other Christian Churches proceeded: those in Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, etc. Therefore, even this last was only a daughter Church, when in its purest state.

***Went down to Antioch***.— That is, Antioch in Syria, as the word is generally to be understood when without addition, so Caesarea is always to be understood Caesarea in Palestine, when without the addition of Philippi.

**Verse 23. *Went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia***— Both were provinces of Asia Minor: see on Acts 2:10.

***In order***— **καθεξης**, A word peculiar to St. Luke; see his Gospel, Luke 1:3; 8:1; and his history of the Acts, Acts 3:24; 11:4, and the place above; the only places where this word occurs in the New Testament. It properly signifies, in order, distinctly, particularly; from **κατα**, according to, and **εξη**, order, as opposed to confusion, indistinctness, etc. If St. Paul went up to Jerusalem at this time, which we are left to infer, for Luke has not expressed it, (Acts 18:22,) it was his fourth journey thither; and this is generally supposed to have been the twenty-first year after his conversion. His first journey is mentioned Acts 9:26; his second, Acts 11:30; his third, Acts 15:4; and his fourth, Acts 18:22, the place above.

**Verse 24. *A certain Jew named Apollos***— One MS., with the Coptic and Armenian, calls him Apelles; and the Codex Bezae, Apollonius. It is strange that we should find a Jew, not only with a Roman name, as Aquila, an eagle; but with the name of one of the false gods, as Apollos or Apollo in the text. Query: Whether the parents of this man were not originally Gentiles, but converted to Judaism after their son Apollo (for so we should write the word) had been born and named.

***Born at Alexandria***— This was a celebrated city of Egypt, built by Alexander the Great, from whom it took its name. It was seated on the Mediterranean Sea, between the Lake Mareotis and the beautiful harbour formed by the Isle of Pharos, about twelve miles west of the Canopic branch of the Nile, in lat. 31°. 10'. N. This city was built under the

direction of Dinocrates, the celebrated architect of the temple of Diana at Ephesus. It was in this city that Ptolemy Soter founded the famous academy called the Museum, in which a society of learned men devoted themselves to philosophical studies. Some of the most celebrated schools of antiquity flourished here; and here was the Tower of Pharos, esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. Alexandria was taken by the French, July 4, 1798, under the command of Bonaparte; and was surrendered to the English under General, now Lord, Hutchinson, in 1801. And, in consequence of the treaty of peace between France and England, it was restored to the Turks. Near this place was the celebrated obelisk, called Cleopatra's Needle; and the no less famous column, called Pompey's Pillar. This city exhibits but very slender remains of its ancient splendor.

*An eloquent man*— Having strong rhetorical powers; highly cultivated, no doubt, in the Alexandrian schools.

*Mighty in the Scriptures*— Thoroughly acquainted with the law and prophets; and well skilled in the Jewish method of interpreting them.

**Verse 25.** *This man was instructed in the way of the Lord*—

κατηχημενος; He was catechized, initiated, in the way, the doctrine, of Jesus as the Christ.

*Being fervent in the spirit*— Being full of zeal to propagate the truth of God, he taught diligently, ακριβως accurately, (so the word should be translated,) the things of Christ as far as he could know them through the ministry of John the Baptist; for it appears he knew nothing more of Christ than what John preached. Some suppose we should read ουκ, not, before ακριβως, correctly, or accurately, because it is said that Aquila and Priscilla expounded the way of the Lord, ακριβεστερον, more perfectly, rather more accurately; but of this emendation there is not the slightest necessity; for surely it is possible for a man to teach accurately what he knows; and it is possible that another, who possesses more information on the subject than the former, may teach him more accurately, or give him a larger portion of knowledge. Apollo knew the baptism of John; but he knew nothing farther of Jesus Christ than that baptism taught; but, as far as he knew, he taught accurately. Aquila and Priscilla were acquainted with the whole doctrine of the Gospel: the doctrine of Christ dying for our sins,

and rising again for our justification; and in this they instructed Apollo; and this was more accurate information than what he had before received, through the medium of John's ministry.

**Verse 26. *They took him unto them***— This eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who was even a public teacher, was not ashamed to be indebted to the instructions of a Christian woman, in matters that not only concerned his own salvation, but also the work of the ministry, in which he was engaged. It is disgraceful to a man to be ignorant, when he may acquire wisdom; but it is no disgrace to acquire wisdom from the meanest person or thing. The adage is good: Despise not advice, even of the meanest: the gagging of geese preserved the Roman state.

**Verse 27. *When he was disposed to pass into Achaia***— There is a very long and important addition here in the Codex Bezae, of which the following is a translation: But certain Corinthians, who sojourned at Ephesus, and heard him, entreated him to pass over with them to their own country. Then, when he had given his consent, the Ephesians wrote to the disciples at Corinth, that they should receive this man. Who, when he was come, etc. The same addition is found in the later Syriac, and in the Itala version in the Codex Bezae.

***Which had believed through grace.***— These words may either refer to Apollo, or to the people at Corinth. It was through grace that they had believed; and it was through grace that Apollo was enabled to help them much.

The words *δια της χαριτος*, through grace, are wanting in the Codex Bezae, the later Syriac, the Vulgate, one copy of the Itala, and in some of the fathers. But this omission might have been the effect of carelessness in the writers of those copies from which the foregoing were taken: the words convey the same idea that is expressed by St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 3:6: Paul planted, and Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. Though this eminent man became the instrument of mightily helping the believers in Corinth, yet he was also the innocent cause of a sort of schism among them. For some, taken by his commanding eloquence, began to range themselves on his side, and prefer him to all other teachers. This evil St. Paul reprehends and corrects in his first epistle to the Corinthians. St. Jerome says that Apollo became bishop of Corinth.

**Verse 28. *He mightily convinced the Jews***— εὐτονῶς διακατηλεγχετο; He vehemently confuted the Jews; and that publicly, not in private conferences, but in his public preaching: showing by the scriptures of the Old Testament, which the Jews received as divinely inspired, that Jesus, who had lately appeared among them, and whom they had crucified, was the Christ, the promised Messiah, and that there was salvation in none other; and that they must receive him as the Messiah, in order to escape the wrath to come. This they refused to do; and we know the consequence. Their city was sacked, their temple burnt, their whole civil and religious polity subverted, more than a million of themselves killed, and the rest scattered over the face of the earth.

1. THE Christian religion did not hide itself in corners and obscure places at first, in order, privately, to get strength, before it dared to show itself publicly. Error, conscious of its weakness, and that its pretensions cannot bear examination, is obliged to observe such a cautious procedure. With what caution, circumspection, and privacy, did Mohammed propose his new religion! He formed a party by little and little, in the most private manner, before he ventured to exhibit his pretensions openly. Not so Christianity: it showed itself in the most public manner, not only in the teaching of Christ, but also in that of the apostles. Even after the crucifixion of our Lord, the apostles and believers went to the temple, the most public place; and in the most public manner taught and worked miracles. JERUSALEM, the seat of the doctors, the judge of religion, was the first place in which, by the command of their Lord, the disciples preached Christ crucified. They were, therefore, not afraid to have their cause tried by the most rigid test of Scripture; and in the very place, too, where that Scripture was best understood.

2. When the same apostles. carried this Gospel to heathen countries, did they go to the villages, among the less informed or comparatively ignorant Greeks, in order to form a party, and shield themselves by getting the multitude on their side? No! They went to Caesarea, to Antioch, to Thessalonica, to ATHENS, to CORINTH, to EPHESUS; to the very places where learning flourished most, where sciences were best cultivated, where imposture was most likely to be detected, and where the secular power existed in the most despotic manner, and could at once have crushed them to nothing could they have been proved to be impostors, or had they not

been under the immediate protection of Heaven! Hence it is evident that these holy men feared no rational investigation of their doctrines, for they taught them in the face of the most celebrated schools in the universe!

3. They preached Christ crucified in JERUSALEM, where it was the most solemn interest of the Jews to disprove their doctrine, that they might exculpate themselves from the murder of Jesus Christ. They preached the same Christ, and the vanity of idolatry, in Athens, in Corinth, and in Ephesus, where idolatry existed in the plenitude of its power; and where all its interests required it to make the moat desperate and formidable stand against those innovators. What but the fullest confidence of the truth of what they preached, the fullest conviction of the Divinity of their doctrine, and the supernatural influence of God upon their souls, could ever have induced these men to preach Christ crucified, either at Jerusalem, or at Athens? I scruple not to assert that the bold, public manner in which the apostles preached the Gospel, among the Jews and Greeks, is a most incontestable proof of the conviction they had of its truth; and the success with which they were favored is a demonstration that what they preached as truth God proved to be the truth, by stretching forth his hand to heal, and causing signs and wonders to be wrought in the name of the holy child Jesus. This is an additional proof of the sincerity of the apostles, and of the truth of Christianity. If Paul and Peter, Barnabas and Silas, had not had the fullest persuasion that their doctrine was of God, they would never have ventured to propose it before the Sanhedrin in JERUSALEM, the literati of CORINTH, and the Stoics and inexorable judges of the Areopagus at ATHENS.

4. We may be surprised to find that, even among the Jews as well as the Gentiles, there were persons who used curious arts. Those were inexcusable; these were to be pitied. Blind as every man is by nature, yet he is conscious that without supernatural assistance he can neither secure the good he needs, nor avoid the evil he fears: therefore, he endeavors to associate to himself the influence of supernatural agents, in order to preserve him in safety, and make him happy. Thus forsaking and forgetting the fountain of living water, he hews out to himself cisterns that can hold no water. The existence of magical arts and incantations, whether real or pretended, prove the general belief of the existence of a spiritual world, and man's consciousness of his own weakness, and his need of



supernatural help. When shall the eye be directed solely to HIM from whom alone true help can come, by whom evil is banished, and happiness restored!

## CHAPTER 19.

*Paul, coming to Ephesus, finds certain disciples who had not received the gift of the Holy Ghost, knowing only the baptism of John, but receive it through the imposition of his hands, 1-7. He preaches for three months in the synagogues, 8. Many being hardened, he leaves the synagogues, and teaches daily in the school of Tyrannus for two years, 9, 10. He works many miracles, 11, 12. Account of the vagabond exorcist Jews, and the seven sons of Sceva, 13-17. Many are converted, and burn their magical books, 18-20. Paul purposes to pass through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, and afterwards to Rome; but, having sent Timotheus and Erastus to Macedonia, continues a little longer in Asia, 21, 22. Demetrius, a silversmith of Ephesus, raises an uproar against Paul, which, after some tumultuous proceedings, is appeased by the town clerk, 23-41.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 19.

**Verse 1.** *And it came to pass-while Apollos was at Corinth*— The Codex Bezae begins this chapter differently. But then Paul was desirous, according to his own counsel, to go to Jerusalem, the Spirit commanded him to return into Asia: then, passing through the upper parts, he came to Ephesus. This addition is also found in the Latin or Itala part of the same MS., and in the margin of the later Syriac.

*Paul having passed through the upper coasts*— That is, through those parts of Asia Minor that lay eastward of Ephesus, such as Galatia, Phrygia, and probably Lycaonia and Lydia; and it is in reference to Ephesus that these are called the upper coasts. See their situation on the map.

**Verse 2.** *Have ye received the Holy Ghost*— It is likely that these were Asiatic Jews, who, having been at Jerusalem about twenty-six years before this, had heard the preaching of John, and received his baptism, believing in the coming Christ, whom John had proclaimed; but it appears that till this time they had got no farther instruction in the Christian religion. Paul,

perceiving this, asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed? For it was the common privilege of the disciples of Christ to receive, not only the ordinary graces, but also the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit; and thus the disciples of Christ differed from those of John, and of all others. John baptized with water; Jesus baptized with the Holy Ghost. And to this day the genuine disciples of Christ are distinguished from all false religionists, and from nominal Christians, by being made partakers of this Spirit, which enlightens their minds, and convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; quickens their souls, witnesses to their conscience that they are the children of God, and purifies their hearts. Those who have not received these blessings from the Holy Spirit, whatever their profession may be, know nothing better than John's baptism: good, excellent in its kind, but ineffectual to the salvation of those who live under the meridian of Christianity.

*We have not so much as heard whether*, etc.— That is, they had not heard that there were particular gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit to be received. They could not mean that they had not heard of the Holy Spirit; for John, in his baptism, announced Christ as about to baptize with the Holy Ghost, Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; but they simply meant that they had not heard that this Spirit, in his gifts, had been given to or received by any one.

**Verse 4.** *That they should believe on him which should come after*— John baptized them with the baptism of repentance; this was common to all the baptisms administered by the Jews to proselytes; but telling them that they should believe on him who was coming, was peculiar to John's baptism.

**Verse 5.** *When they heard this*, etc.— As there is no evidence in the New Testament of persons being rebaptized, unless this be one, many criticisms have been hazarded to prove that these persons were not rebaptized. I see no need of this. To be a Christian, a man must be baptized in the Christian faith: these persons had not been baptized into that faith, and therefore were not Christians: they felt this, and were immediately baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. This is a plain case; but let one instance be produced of a person being rebaptized, who had before been baptized in the name of the holy Trinity, or even in the name of Jesus alone. In my view, it is an awful thing to iterate baptism when it had been before

essentially performed: by “essentially performed,” I mean, administered by sprinkling, washing, or plunging, by or in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, being invoked at the time. Whoever has had this has the essence of baptism, as far as that can be conferred by man; and it matters not at what period of his life he has had it; it is a substantial baptism, and by it the person has been fully consecrated to the holy and blessed Trinity; and there should not be an iteration of this consecration on any account whatever. It is totally contrary to the canon law; it is contrary to the decisions of the best divines; it is contrary to the practice of the purest ages of the Church of God; it is contrary to the New Testament, and tends to bring this sacred ordinance into disrepute.

**Verse 6. *They spake with tongues, and prophesied.***— They received the miraculous gift of different languages; and in those languages they taught to the people the great doctrines of the Christian religion; for this appears to be the meaning of the word *προεφητευον*, prophesied, as it is used above.

**Verse 8. *Spake boldly-three months***— We have often remarked that St. Paul, in every place, made his first offers of salvation to the Jews; and it was only when they rejected it, that he turned to the Gentiles; see Acts 18:6. And the same line of conduct he pursues here: he goes to the school of Tyrannus, at least a public place, to which all might resort, when they obstinately rejected the Gospel in the synagogue.

***Disputing and persuading***— *διαλεγομενους, και πειθων*, Holding conversations with them, in order to persuade them of the truth of the doctrine of Christ.

**Verse 9. *When divers were hardened***— *τινες*, When some of them were hardened; several no doubt felt the power of Divine truth, and yielded consent. Our term divers, one of the most bald in our language, has too general a meaning for this place.

Behold the effect of the word of God! It is a savour of life unto life, or death unto death, according as it is received or rejected. The twelve men mentioned above received it affectionately, and they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; the others were hardened, for they refused to believe; and they calumniated the doctrine, and became Satan’s preachers among the multitude, to prejudice them against Christ and his religion.

*Separated the disciples*— Paul, and those converted under his ministry, had doubtless been in the habit of attending public worship in the synagogue: but, on the persecuting conduct of these Jews; he and his converts wholly withdrew from the synagogue, and took a place for themselves; and constantly afterwards held their own meetings at a school room, which they hired no doubt for the purpose.

*The school of one Tyrannus.*— For *σχολη*, the school, one MS. has *συναγωγη*, the synagogue; and, for Tyrannus, some have Tyrannios. Some have considered the original word as being an epithet, rather than the name of a person; and think that a prince or nobleman is intended, because *τυραννος*, tyrant, is taken in this sense: but this is a most unlikely conjecture. It appears that the person in question was a schoolmaster, and that he lent or hired his room to the apostles; and that they preached daily in it to as many, both Jews and Gentiles, as chose to attend. It is very likely that Tyrannus was a Jew, and was at least well affected to the Christian cause; for we have many proofs that individuals among them kept schools for the instruction of their youth; besides the schools or academies kept by the more celebrated rabbins. See Schoettgen and Vitringa. The school of Tyrannus might have been such a place as Exeter Hall, and such like places for public and especially for extraordinary religious meetings in London.

**Verse 10.** *By the space of two years*— The schoolhouse of Tyrannus was his regular chapel; and it is likely that in it he taught Christianity, as Tyrannus taught languages or sciences.

*All they-in Asia heard the word*— Meaning, probably, the Proconsular Asia, for the extent of which see the note on Acts 16:6.

*Jews and Greeks.*— For, although he ceased preaching in the synagogues of the Jews, yet they continued to hear him in the school of Tyrannus. But it is likely that Paul did not confine himself to this place, but went about through the different towns and villages; without which, how could all Asia have heard the word? By Greeks, we are to understand, not only the proselytes of the gate, but the heathens in general.

**Verse 11.** *God wrought special miracles*— *δυναμεις τε ου τας τυχαυσας*, Miracles of no ordinary kind, i.e. extraordinary miracles.

**Verse 12. *Handkerchiefs or aprons***— σουδαρια η σιμικινθια, Probably the sudaria were a sort of handkerchiefs, which, in travelling, were always carried in the hand, for the convenience of wiping the face; and the simikinthia were either the sashes or girdles that went about the loins. These, borrowed from the apostle, and applied to the bodies of the diseased, became the means, in the hand of God, of their restoration to health.

*The diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*— Here, there is a most evident distinction made between the diseases and the evil spirits: hence they were not one and the same thing.

**Verse 13. *Certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists***— τινες απο των περιερχομενων ιουδαιων εξορκιστων; Certain of the Jews who went about practicing exorcisms. Vagabond has a very bad acceptance among us; but, literally, vagabundus signifies a wanderer, one that has no settled place of abode. These, like all their countrymen, in all places, went about to get their bread in what way they could; making trial of every thing by which they could have the prospect of gain. Finding that Paul cast out demons through the name of Jesus, they thought, by using the same, they might produce the same effects; and, if they could, they knew it would be to them an ample source of revenue; for demoniacs abounded in the land.

**Verse 14. *Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests***— The original ιουδαιου αρχιερωσ, dignifies a Jewish high priest; but it is not probable that any sons, much less seven sons of a Jewish high priest, should be strolling exorcists: it is therefore likely that υιοι σκευα τινος ιερωσ, the sons of Skeva, a certain priest, as it stands in the Codex Bezae, is the true reading. The whole verse in that MS. reads thus: Among them there also the sons of Skeva, a priest, who wished to do the same: for they were accustomed to exorcise such persons. And entering in to the demoniac, they began to invoke that Name, saying, We command thee by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth, to go out. And the evil spirit angered, and said unto them, Jesus I know, etc. It has been often remarked that in our Lord's time there were many of the Jews that professed to cast out demons; and perhaps to this our Lord alludes, Matthew 12:27. See the note there.

Josephus, in speaking of the wisdom of Solomon, says that he had that skill by which demons are expelled; and that he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they are cast out; and that those arts were known among his countrymen down to his own time; and then gives us the following relation: “I have seen a certain man of my own country whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacs, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: He put a ring, that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon, to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and, when the man fell down, immediately he adjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations that he had composed. And when Eleazar would persuade the spectators that he had such power, he set at a little distance a cup of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it; and, when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon were showed very manifestly.” Joseph. ANTIQ. book viii. cap. 2, sect. 5. Whiston’s edition.

That there were such incantations among the Jews we know well, and that there are still such found, and that they are attributed to Solomon; but that they are his remains to be proved; and could this even be done, a point remains which can never be proved, viz. that those curious arts were a part of that wisdom which he received from God, as Josephus intimates. Indeed, the whole of the above account gives the strongest suspicion of its being a trick by the Jewish juggler, which neither Josephus nor the emperor could detect; but the ring, the root, the cup of water, the spell, etc.; all indicate imposture. Magicians among the Jews were termed **שם בעלי** *baaley shem*, Masters of the Name, that is, the name of Jehovah **יהוה** by a certain pronunciation of which they believed the most wonderful miracles could be wrought. There were several among them who pretended to this knowledge; and, when they could not deny the miracles of our Lord, they attributed them to his knowledge of the true pronunciation of this most sacred name.

**Verse 15. *Jesus I know, and Paul I know***— In the answer of the demoniac, the verb is varied: **τον ιησουν γινωσκω, και τον παυλον επισταμαι· υμεις δε τινες (τινος) εστε.** I acknowledge Jesus, and am

acquainted with Paul; but of whom are ye? Ye belong to neither; ye have no authority. And he soon gave them full proof of this. This distinction is observed in my old MS. Bible: I have knowe Jesu, and I wote Poule; forsothe who ben yee.

**Verse 16.** *And the man in whom the evil spirit was*, etc.— Thus we find that one man was more powerful than these seven brothers; so that he stripped them of their upper garments, and beat and wounded the whole! Was not this a proof that he derived his strength from the evil spirit that dwelt in him?

**Verse 17.** *The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified*.— They saw that there was a sovereign power in the name of Jesus, which could not be imitated by these lying exorcists: they therefore revered this name, and despised those pretenders.

Exorcisms or adjurations of evil spirits were very frequent in the primitive Church: the name of JESUS was that alone which was used. The primitive fathers speak strong and decisive words concerning the power of this name; and how demons were tormented and expelled by it, not only from individuals, but from the temples themselves. Exorcists formed a distinct class in the Church; hence we read of presbyters, deacons, exorcists, lectors, and door-keepers. The adjuration was commonly used over the catechumens, before they were admitted to baptism. Gregory of Nazianzen, and Cyril of Jerusalem speak much of this rite. See my Succession of Sacred Literature, under Cyril, and GREGORY Nazianzen; and see Suicer, under *εξορκισμος*.

**Verse 19.** *Which used curious arts*— *τα περιεργα*. From the use of this word in the Greek writers, we know that it signified magical arts, sorceries, incantations, etc. Ephesus abounded with these. Dio Cassius, speaking of the Emperor Adrian, says, *ὁ ἀδριανὸς περιεργωτάτος ἦν καὶ μαντείας καὶ μαγανείας παντοδαπαῖς ἐχρητο*. “Adrian was exceedingly addicted to curious arts, and practised divination and magic.” These practices prevailed in all nations of the earth.

*Brought their books together*— The *εφεσια γραμματα*, or Ephesian characters, are celebrated in antiquity; they appear to have been amulets, inscribed with strange characters, which were carried about the body for



the purpose of curing diseases, expelling demons, and preserving from evils of different kinds. The books brought together on this occasion were such as taught the science, manner of formation, use, etc., of these charms.

Suidas, under **εφεσια γραμματα**, Ephesian letters, gives us the following account. "Certain obscure incantations.-When Milesius and Ephesius wrestled at the Olympic games, Milesius could not prevail, because his antagonist had the Ephesian letters bound to his heels; when this was discovered, and the letters taken away, it is reported that Milesius threw him thirty times."

The information given by Hesychius is still more curious: **εφεσια γραμματα**. ην μεν παλαι στ' υστερον δε προσεθεσαν τινες απατεωνες και αλλα: φασι δε των πρωτων τα ονοματα, ταδε ασκιον, κατασκιον, λιξ, τετραξ, δαμναμενευς, αισιον· δηλοι δε, το μεν ασκιον, σκοτος· το δε κατα σκιον, φως· το δε λιξ, γη· τετραξ δε, ενιαυτος· δαμναμενευς δε, ηλιος· αισιον δε, αληθες. ταυτα ουν ιερα εστι και αγια. "The Ephesian letters or characters were formerly six, but certain deceivers added others afterwards; and their names, according to report, were these: ASKION, KATASKION, LIX, TETRAX, DAMNAMENEUS, and AISLON. It is evident that Askion signifies DARKNESS; Kataskion, LIGHT; Lix, the EARTH; Tetrax, the YEAR; Damnameneus, the SUN; and Aision, TRUTH. These are holy and sacred things." The same account may be seen in Clemens Alexandrinus; Strom. lib. v. cap. 8, where he attempts to give the etymology of these different terms. These words served, no doubt, as the keys to different spells and incantations; and were used in order to the attainment of a great variety of ends. The Abraxas of the Basilidians, in the second century, were formed on the basis of the Ephesian letters; for those instruments of incantation, several of which are now before me, are inscribed with a number of words and characters equally as unintelligible as the above, and in many cases more so.

Then it is said they brought their books together, we are to understand the books which treated of these curious arts; such as the **εφεσια γραμματα**, or Ephesian characters.

*And burned them before all*— These must have been thoroughly convinced of the truth of Christianity, and of the unlawfulness of their own arts.

*Fifty thousand pieces of silver.*— Some think that the ἀργύριον, which we translate piece of silver, means a shekel, as that word is used Matthew 26:16, where see the note; 50,000 shekels, at 3s., according to Dean Prideaux's valuation, (which is that followed throughout this work,) would amount to 7,500ú.

But, as this was a Roman and not a Jewish country, we may rationally suppose that the Jewish coin was not here current; and that the ἀργύριον, or silver coin, mentioned by St. Luke, must have been either Greek or Roman; and, it is very likely that the sestertius is meant, which was always a silver coin, about the value, according to Arbuthnot, of two-pence, or 1d. 3q3/4., which answers to the fourth part of a denarius, rated by the same author at 7 3/4d. Allowing this to be the coin intended, the 50,000 sestertii would amount to 403ú. 12s. 11d.

The Vulgate reads, denariorum quinquaginta millium, fifty thousand denarii, which, at 7 3/4 d., will amount to 1,614ú. 11s. 8d. The reading of the Itala version of the Codex Bezae is very singular, Denariorum sestertia ducenta. "Two hundred sesterces of denarii;" which may signify no more than "two hundred sestertii of Roman money:" for in this sense denarius is certainly used by Cicero, Orat. pro Quint.; where ad denarium solvere, means to pay in Roman money, an expression similar to our word sterling. This sum would amount to no more than 1ú. 12s. 3 1/2d. But that which is computed from the sestertius is the most probable amount.

**Verse 20.** *So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.*— The Codex Bezae reads this verse thus: "So mightily grew the word of the Lord, and prevailed; and the faith of God increased and multiplied." It is probable that it was about this time that St. Paul had that conflict which he mentions, 1 Corinthians 15:32: If I after the manner of men, have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, etc. See the note there. It means some severe trials not here mentioned, unless we may suppose him to refer to the ferocious insurrection headed by Demetrius, mentioned at the end of this chapter. {Acts 19:38}

**Verse 21. *Paul purposed in the spirit***, etc.— Previously to this he appears to have concerted a journey to Macedonia, and a visit to Corinth, the capital of Achaia, where he seems to have spent a considerable time, probably the whole winter of A.D. 58; see 1 Corinthians 16:5, 6; and afterwards to go to Jerusalem; but it is likely that he did not leave Ephesus till after pentecost, A.D. 59. (1 Corinthians 16:8.) And he resolved, if possible, to see Rome, which had been the object of his wishes for a considerable time. See Romans 1:10, 13; 16:23.

It is generally believed that, during this period, while at Ephesus, he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians. He had heard that some strange disorders had entered into that Church:-1. That there were divisions among them; some extolling Paul, beyond all others; some, Peter; others, Apollos. 2. He had learned from Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, whom he saw at Ephesus, 1 Corinthians 16:17; 7:1, that several abuses had crept into their religious assemblies. 3. That even the Christians went to law with each other, and that before the heathens. And, 4. That a person professing Christianity in that city, had formed a matrimonial contract with his step-mother. It was to remedy those disorders that he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, in which he strongly reprehends all the above evils.

**Verse 22. *So he sent into Macedonia***— He desired Timothy to go as far as Corinth, 1 Corinthians 4:18, and after that to return to him at Ephesus, 1 Corinthians 16:11; but he himself continued in Asia some time longer; probably to make collections for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Erastus, mentioned here for the first time, appears to have been the chamberlain, *οικονομος*, either of Ephesus or Corinth; see Romans 16:23. He was one of St. Paul's companions, and is mentioned as being left by the apostle at Corinth, 2 Timothy 4:20.

**Verse 23. *No small stir about that way***.— Concerning the Gospel, which the apostles preached; and which is termed this way, Acts 9:2, where see the note.

**Verse 24. *Silver shrines for Diana***— It is generally known that the temple of Diana at Ephesus was deemed one of the seven wonders of the world, and was a most superb building. It appears that the silver shrines mentioned here were small portable representations of this temple, which

were bought by strangers as matters of curiosity, and probably of devotion. If we can suppose them to have been exact models of this famous temple, representing the whole exterior of its magnificent workmanship, which is possible, they would be held in high estimation, and probably become a sort of substitute for the temple itself, to worshippers of this goddess who lived in distant parts of Greece. The temple of Diana was raised at the expense of all Asia Minor, and yet was two hundred and twenty years in building, before it was brought to its sum of perfection. It was in length 425 feet, by 220 in breadth; and was beautified by 127 columns, which were made at the expense of so many kings; and was adorned with the most beautiful statues. To procure himself an everlasting fame, Erostratus burned it to the ground the same night on which Alexander the Great was born. It is reported that Alexander offered to make it as magnificent as it was before, provided he might put his name on the front; but this was refused. It was afterwards rebuilt and adorned, but Nero plundered it of all its riches. This grand building remains almost entire to the present day, and is now turned into a Turkish mosque. See an account of it in Montfaucon, *Antiq. Expliq.* vol. ii., with a beautiful drawing on plate vi., No. 20. See also Stuart's *Athens*. There were also pieces of silver struck with a representation of the temple of Minerva on one side: many coins occur in the reigns of the first Roman emperors, where temples, with idols in the porch, appear on the reverse; and several may be seen in Muselius, in the reigns of Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus Pius, etc. A beautiful representation of the temple of Diana at Ephesus may be seen on a medal engraved by Montfaucon, in his *Antiq. Expliq. Suppl.* vol. ii. plate 33. It has eight Doric columns in front, which Pliny says were sixty feet in length. In the entrance, the figure of Diana is represented with a sort of tower upon her head; her arms are supported by two staves; at her feet are represented two stags with their backs towards each other. The sun is represented on the right side of her head, and the moon as a crescent on the left. On each side and at the bottom of this temple are the words, *πρωτων ασιαζ εφεσιων*. Some think that the medals here referred to are the same that are meant by the silver shrines made by Demetrius and his craftsmen. See the note on Acts 19:27.

***Brought no small gain***— There were many made, many sold, and probably at considerable prices.

**Verse 25. *By this craft we have our wealth.***— The word *εμπορια* not only signifies wealth, but also abundance. It was a most lucrative trade; and he plainly saw that, if the apostles were permitted to go on thus preaching, the worship of Diana itself would be destroyed; and, consequently, all the gain that he and his fellows derived from it would be brought to nought.

**Verse 26. *This Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people***— From the mouth of this heathen we have, in one sentence, a most pleasing account of the success with which God had blessed the labors of the apostles: not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, they had persuaded and converted much people; for they had insisted that they could be no gods which are made with hands; and this the common sense of the people must at once perceive.

**Verse 27. *The temple of the great goddess Diana***— From a number of representations of the Ephesian goddess Diana, which still remain, we find that she was widely different from Diana the huntress. She is represented in some statues all covered over with breasts, from the shoulders down to the feet; in others she is thus represented, from the breast to the bottom of the abdomen, the thighs and legs being covered with the heads of different animals. From this it is evident that, under this name and form, nature, the nourisher and supporter of all things, was worshipped: the sun and moon, being grand agents, in all natural productions, were properly introduced as her attributes or symbols. Because she was the representative of universal nature, she was called, in opposition to Diana the huntress and goddess of chastity, the GREAT goddess Diana; not only worshipped in Asia, but throughout the whole world; both the Greeks and the Romans unanimously conjoining in her worship.

Several statues of this Ephesian Diana still remain; and some beautiful ones are represented by Montfaucon, in his *Antiq. Expliq.* vol. i. book iii. cap. 15, plates 46, 47, 48. From this father of antiquaries, much information on this subject may be derived. He observes that the original statue of Diana of Ephesus, which was in that noble temple, esteemed one of the wonders of the world, was made of ivory, as Pliny says; but Vitruvius says it was made of cedar; and others, of the wood of the vine. The images of this goddess are divided into several bands, or compartments; so that they

appear swathed from the breasts to the feet. On the head is generally represented a large tower, two stories high. A kind of festoon of flowers and fruit descends from her shoulders; in the void places of the festoon a crab is often represented, and sometimes crowned by two genii or victories. The arms are generally extended, or stretched a little out from the sides; and on each one or two lions. Below the festoon, between the two first bands, there are a great number of paps: hence she has been styled by some of the ancients, Multimammia, and *πολυμαστος*, the goddess with the multitude of paps: on one figure I count nineteen. Between the second and third bands, birds are represented; between the third and fourth, a human head with tritons; between the fourth and fifth, heads of oxen. Most of the images of this goddess are represented as swathed nearly to the ancles, about which the folds of her robe appear. Though there is a general resemblance in all the images of the Ephesian Diana, yet some have more figures or symbols, some less: these symbols are generally paps, human figures, oxen, lions, stags, griffins, sphinxes, reptiles, bees, branches of trees, and roses.

That nature is intended by this goddess is evident from the inscription on two of those represented by Montfaucon: *παναιολος φυσικς παντων μητηρ*, Nature, full of varied creatures, and mother of all things. It is evident that this Diana was a composition of several deities: her crown of turrets belongs to Cybele, the mother of the gods; the lions were sacred to her also; the fruits and oxen are symbols of Ceres; the griffins were sacred to Apollo; and the deer or stags to Diana. The crab being placed within the festoon of flowers evidently refers to the northern tropic Cancer; and the crab being crowned in that quarter may refer to the sun having accomplished his course, and begun to return with an increase of light, heat, etc: The paps, or breasts, as has already been observed, show her to be the nurse of all things; and the different animals and vegetables represented on those images point out nature as the supporter of the animal and vegetable world: the moon and tritons show her influence on the sea; and the sun her influence on the earth. All these things considered, it is no wonder that this goddess was called at Ephesus the Great Diana, and that she was worshipped, not only in that city, but in all the world. In the worship of this deity, and in the construction of her images, the heathens seem to have consulted common sense and reason in rather an

unusual manner. But we must observe, also, that among the Greeks and Romans they had two classes of deities: the Dii Majores, and the Dii Minores: the great gods, and the minor gods. The latter were innumerable; but the former; among whom was Diana, were only twelve—Jupiter, Neptune, Apollo, Mars, Mercury, and Vulcan; Juno, Vesta, Ceres, Diana, Venus, and Minerva. These twelve were adored through the whole Gentile world, under a variety of names.

**Verse 29. *The whole city was filled with confusion***— Thus we find the peace of the whole city was disturbed, not by an apostle preaching the Gospel of Christ, but by one interested, unprincipled knave, who did not even plead conscience for what he was doing; but that it was by this craft he and his fellows got their wealth, and he was afraid to lose it.

***Rushed-into the theater.***— The theatres, being very spacious and convenient places, were often used for popular assemblies and public deliberation, especially in matters which regarded the safety of the state. There are several proofs of this in ancient authors. So Tacitus, Hist. ii. 80, speaking concerning Vespasian, says: Antiochensium theatrum ingressus, ubi illis consultare mos est, concurrentes et in adulationem effusos alloquitur. “Having entered into the theater of the Antiochians, where it was the custom to hold consultations, the people running together, and being profuse in flattery, he addressed them.” Frontinus, in Stratagem lib. iii. cap. 2, speaking of a public meeting at the theater at Agrigentum, observes, ubi ex more Graecorum locus consultationi praebebatur; which, according to the custom of the Greeks, is the place for public deliberation. See several examples in Kypke.

**Verse 31. *Certain of the chief of Asia***— *τινες των ασιαρχων*; Some of the Asiarchs. The Asiarchs were those to whom the care and regulation of the public games were intrusted: they were a sort of high priests, and were always persons of considerable riches and influence. These could not have been Christians; but they were what the sacred text states them to have been, *αυτω φιλοι*, his friends; and foreseeing that Paul would be exposed to great danger if he went into the theater, amidst such a tumultuous assembly, they sent a message to him, entreating him not to go into danger so apparent. Query: Did he not go, and fight with these wild beasts at Ephesus? 1 Corinthians 15:32.

**Verse 32. *Some-cried one thing, and some another***— This is an admirable description of a tumultuous mob, gathered together without law or reason; getting their passions inflamed, and looking for an opportunity to commit outrages, without why or wherefore-principle or object.

***For the assembly was confused***— ἡ ἐκκλησια; The same word which we translate church; and thus we find that it signifies any assembly, good or bad, lawful, or unlawful; and that only the circumstances of the case can determine the precise nature of the assembly to which this word is applied.

**Verse 33. *They drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward***— From this and the following verses it is pretty evident that this Alexander was brought forward on this occasion by the Jews, that he might make an oration to the multitude, in order to exculpate the Jews, who were often by the heathens confounded with the Christians; and cast the whole blame of the uproar upon Paul and his party. And he was probably chosen because he was an able speaker; and when he beckoned with his hand; to gain an audience, the Greeks, knowing that he was a Jew, and consequently as much opposed to the worship of Diana as Paul was, would not hear him; and therefore, to drown his apology, **τω δημω**, for the people, viz. the Jews, they vociferated for the space of two hours, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! There does not seem any just ground from the text to suppose that this Alexander was a Christian; or that he was about to make an apology for the Christians: it is generally believed that he is the same with Alexander the coppersmith, of whom St. Paul speaks, 2 Timothy 4:14, and whom, with Philetus, he was obliged to excommunicate, 1 Timothy 1:20. By the Jews putting him forward, we are to understand their earnestness to get him to undertake their defense, and criminate, as much as possible, St. Paul and his companions, and the Christian cause in general; which he would no doubt have done, without vindicating the worship of Diana, which, as a Jew, he would not dare to attempt.

**Verse 35. *When the town-clerk***— ὀγραμματοεὺς, Literally, the scribe. The Syriac has (Syriac) reisha damedinato, the chief or prince of the city. The later Syriac has, the scribe of the city. Some think that the word recorder would do better here than town-clerk; and indeed it is evident that



a magistrate of considerable authority and influence is intended—the mayor or sovereign of the city.

***Ye men of Ephesus***— The speech of this man may be thus analyzed: He states that there was no need of a public declaration that the Ephesians were worshippers of Diana; this every person knew, and nobody attempted to contest it, Acts 19:35, 36. 2. That the persons accused were not guilty of any public offense, nor of any breach of the laws of the city, Acts 19:37. 3. That, if they were, this was not a legal method of prosecuting them, Acts 19:38, 39. 4. That they themselves, by this tumultuous meeting, had exposed themselves to the censure of the law, and were in danger of being called into question for it, Acts 19:40. See Dodd.

***Is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana***— The word νεοκορος, neocoros, which we translate worshipper, signified at first, among the ancient Greeks, no more than sweeper of the temple, and answered nearly to our sexton: in process of time, the care of the temple was intrusted to this person: at length the neocori became persons of great consequence, and were those who offered sacrifices for the life of the emperor. Whole cities took this appellation, as appears on many ancient coins and medals; and Ephesus is supposed to have been the first that assumed this title. At this time, it was commonly known as belonging to this city. “What man is there that knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is the Neocoros of the great goddess Diana?” As if he had said: “The whole city is devoted to her worship: it is reputed an honor to our highest characters even to sweep her temple, and open and shut her doors. Besides, we offer to her the highest sacrifices; and are intrusted with the religious service that pertains to the emperor’s safety.”

***Of the image which fell down from Jupiter?***— The original image of the Ephesian Diana (see on Acts 19:27) was supposed to have descended from heaven; which intimates that it was so old that no person knew either its maker or the time in which it was formed, and it was the interest of the priests to persuade the people that this image had been sent to them as a present from Jupiter himself. Several images and sacred things were supposed, among the heathens, to be presents immediately from heaven. Euripides states the image of Diana of Tauri to be of this kind; and calls it **διοπετες αγαλμα**, the image fallen from Jupiter. Numa pretended that the

ancilia, or sacred shields, had come from heaven. In imitation of these, many of the Italian papists believe that the shrine of our lady of Loretto was also a Divine gift to their country. St. Isidore, of Damietta, says that the heathen, in order to induce the people to believe that such images came from heaven, either banished or slew the artists that had formed them, that there might be no evidence of the time in which, or the persons by whom, they were made: this point secured, it was easy to persuade the credulous multitude that they had been sent from heaven. The story of the Palladium, on which the safety of Troy was said to depend, is well known. It was an image of Minerva, and also supposed to have descended from Jupiter.

**Verse 37. *These men-are neither robbers of churches***— ἵρυσυλους; Spoilers of sacred places. As his design evidently was to appease and conciliate the people, he fixed first on a most incontrovertible fact: These men have not spoiled your temples; nor is there any evidence that they have even blasphemed your goddess. The apostles acted as prudent men should: they endeavored to enlighten the minds of the multitude, that the absurdity of their gross errors might be the more apparent; for, when they should know the truth, it was likely that they would at once abandon such gross falsehood.

**Verse 38. *If Demetrius-have a matter against any man***— If it be any breach of law, in reference to Demetrius and the artists, the law is open, αγοραιοι αγωνται; these are the terms of law, public courts, times of sessions or assize; or, rather, the judges are now sitting: so the words may be understood. And there are deputies, ανθυπατοι, proconsuls, appointed to guard the peace of the state, and to support every honest man in his right: let them implead one another; let the one party bring forward his action of assault or trespass, and the other put in his defense: the laws are equal and impartial, and justice will be done to him who is wronged.

**Verse 39. *But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters***— In which the safety of the state, or the national worship, is concerned, know that such a matter is not the business of the mob; it must be heard and determined in a lawful assembly, εν τη εννομω εκκλησια, one legally constituted, and properly authorized to hear and determine on the subject.

**Verse 40. *For we are in danger***, etc.— Popular commotions were always dreaded by the Roman government; and so they should by all governments; for, when might has nothing to direct its operations but passion, how destructive must these operations be! One of the Roman laws made all such commotions of the people capital offenses against those who raised them. *Qui caetum et concursus fecerit, capite puniatur*: “He who raises a mob shall forfeit his life.” If such a law existed at Ephesus—and it probably did, from this reference to it in the words of the town-clerk or recorder—then Demetrius must feel himself in great personal danger; and that his own life lay now at the mercy of those whom he had accused, concerning whom he had raised such an outcry, and against whom nothing disorderly could be proved.

**Verse 41. *He dismissed the assembly***.— *την εκκλησιαν*. Another proof that the word *εκκλησια*, which we generally translate church, signifies an assembly of any kind, good or bad, legal or illegal.

1. How forcible are right words! From the conduct of this prudent, sensible man, we may learn how much influence persons of this character may have, even over the unbridled multitude. But, where the civil power associates itself with the lawless might of the many, THERE must be confusion and every evil work. What a blessing to the community is the civil law! Were it not for this, the unthinking multitude would destroy others, and at last destroy themselves. Law and justice are from God; and the civil power, by which they are supported and administered, should be respected by all who regard the safety of their persons or property.

2. Though the ministry of St. Paul was greatly blessed at Ephesus, and his preaching appears to have been very popular, yet this sunshine was soon darkened: peace with the world cannot last long; the way of the Lord will always be opposed by those who love their own ways.

3. How few would make an outward profession of religion, were there no gain connected with it! And yet, as one justly observes, religion is rendered gainful only by some external part of it. For this very reason, the external part of religion is always on the increase, and none can find fault with it without raising storms and tempests; while the internal part wastes and decays, no man laying it to heart. Demetrius and his fellows would have made no stir for their worship, had not the apostle’s preaching tended to

discredit that by which they got their wealth. Most of the outcries that have been made against all revivals of religion—revivals by which the Church has been called back to its primitive principles and purity, have arisen out of self-interest. The cry of, the Church is in danger, has been echoed only by those who found their secular interest at stake; and knew that reformation must unmask them and show that the slothful and wicked servants could no longer be permitted to live on the revenues of that Church which they disgraced by their lives, and corrupted by their false doctrines. He that eats the Church's bread should do the Church's world: and he that will not work should not be permitted to eat.

## CHAPTER 20.

*Paul retires to Macedonia, 1. He goes into Greece, where he tarries three months and, purposing to sail to Syria, he returns through Macedonia, 2, 3. Several persons accompany him into Asia, and then go before and tarry for him at Troas, 4, 5. Paul and Luke sail from Philippi, and in five days reach Troas, where they meet their brethren from Asia, and abide there seven days, 6. On the first day of the week, the disciples coming together to break bread, Paul preaching to them, and continuing his speech till midnight, a young man of the name of Eutychus, being in a deep sleep, fell from the third loft and was killed, 7-9. Paul restores him to life, resumes his discourse, and continuing it till daybreak, then departs, 10-12. Luke and his companions come to Assos, whither Paul comes by land, 13. He embarks with them at Assos, comes to Mitylene, 14. Sails thence, and passes by Chios, arrives at Samos, tarries at Trogyllium, and comes to Miletus, 15. Purposing to get as soon as possible to Jerusalem, he sends from Miletus, and calls the elders of the Church of Ephesus, to whom he preaches a most directing sermon, gives them the most solemn exhortations, kneels down and prays with them, takes a very affecting leave of them, and sets sail for Caesarea, in order to go to Jerusalem, 16-38.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20.

**Verse 1. *After the uproar was ceased***— The tumult excited by Demetrius apparently induced Paul to leave Ephesus sooner than he had intended. He had written to the Corinthians that he should leave that place after pentecost, 1 Corinthians 16:8; but it is very probable that he left it sooner.

**Verse 2. *He came into Greece***— εἰς τὴν ἑλλάδα, Into Hellas, Greece properly so called, the regions between Thessaly and Propontis, and the country of Achaia. He did not, however, go there immediately: he passed through Macedonia, Acts 20:1, in which he informs us, 2 Corinthians 7:5-7, that he suffered much, both from believers and infidels; but was greatly comforted by the arrival of Titus, who gave him a very flattering account of the prosperous state of the Church at Corinth. A short time

after this, being still in Macedonia, he sent Titus back to Corinth, 2 Corinthians 8:16, 17, and sent by him the second epistle which he wrote to that Church, as Theodoret and others suppose. Some time after, he visited Corinth himself, according to his promise, 1 Corinthians 16:5. This was his third voyage to that city, 2 Corinthians 12:14; 13:1. What he did there at this time cannot be distinctly known; but, according to St. Augustin, he ordered every thing relative to the holy eucharist, and the proper manner in which it was to be received. See Calmet.

**Verse 3. *Abode three months***— Partly, as we may suppose, at Corinth, at Athens, and in Achaia; from which place he is supposed to have sent his epistle to the Romans, because he continued longer here than at any other place, and mentions several of the Corinthians in his salutations to the believers of Rome.

***When the Jesus laid wait for him***— Paul had determined to go by sea to Syria, and from thence to Jerusalem. This was the first object of his journey; and this was the readiest road he could take; but, hearing that the Jews had laid wait for him, probably to attack his ship on the voyage, seize his person, sell him for a slave, and take the money which he was carrying to the poor saints at Jerusalem, he resolved to go as much of the journey as he conveniently could, by land. Therefore, he returned through Macedonia, and from thence to Troas, where he embarked to sail for Syria, on his way to Jerusalem. The whole of his journey is detailed in this and the following chapter. See also the map.

**Verse 4. *And there accompanied him***— Rather, says Bishop Pearce, there followed him as far as to Asia; for they were not in his company till he set sail from Philippi, and came to them at Troas, in Asia, whither they had gone before, and where they tarried for him, Acts 20:5.

***Into Asia***— *αχρι της ασιας*; These words are wanting in two MSS., Erpen, the Aethiopic, Coptic, and Vulgate. Some think that they embarrass this place; for how these could accompany him into Asia, and go before him, and tarry for him at Troas, Acts 20:6, is not so very clear; unless we suppose, what I have glanced at in the table of contents, that they came with him to Asia, but, he tarrying a short time, they proceeded on their journey, and stopped for him at Troas, where he shortly after rejoined them. Mr. Wakefield gets rid of the difficulty by reading the verse

thus: Now Sopater of Berea accompanied him; but Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy of Lystra, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia, went before, and tarried for us at Troas.

***Sopater of Berea***— Sopater seems to be the same as Sosipater, whom St. Paul mentions as his kinsman, Romans 16:21. ADE, more than twenty others, with the Coptic, Armenian, later Syriac in the margin, Vulgate, Itala, Theophylact, Origen, and Bede, add **πυρρον**, Sopater the SON OF PYRRHUS. Griesbach has received this into his text.

***Aristarchus of Thessalonica***— This person occurs in Acts 19:29, and is mentioned there as a Macedonian. He attended Paul in his journey to Rome, Acts 27:2, and was his fellow laborer, Philemon 24, and his fellow prisoner, Colossians 4:10, 11. Secundus is mentioned nowhere but in this place.

***Gaius of Derbe***— This is supposed to be the same who is mentioned Acts 19:26, and who is there called a man of Macedonia, of which some suppose he was a native, but descended from a family that came from Derbe; but as Gaius, or Caius, was a very common name, these might have been two distinct persons. One of this name was baptized by St. Paul at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 1:14, and entertained him as his host while he abode there, Romans 16:23, and was probably the same to whom St. John directs his third epistle.

***And Timotheus***— Of Lystra, is added by the Syriac. This was the same person of whom mention is made, Acts 16:1, and to whom St. Paul wrote the two epistles which are still extant; and who was a native of Lystra, as we learn from the above place. It was on this evidence, probably that the ancient Syriac translator added, of Lystra, to the text. This reading is not supported by any MSS.

***Tychicus-of Asia***— This person was high in the confidence of St. Paul. He styles him a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, whom he sent to the Ephesians, that he might know their affairs, and comfort their hearts, Ephesians 6:21, 22. He sent him for the same purpose, and with the same commendations, to the Colossians, Colossians 4:7, 8. Paul seems also to have designed him to superintend the Church at Crete in the

absence of Titus; see Titus 3:12. He seems to have been the most intimate and confidential friend that Paul had.

***Trophimus.***— Was an Ephesian; and both he and Tychicus are called **εφεσιοι**, Ephesians, instead of **ασιανοι**, Asiatics, in the Codex Bezae, both Greek and Latin, and in the Sahidic. He accompanied Paul from Ephesus into Greece, as we see here; and from thence to Jerusalem, Acts 21:29. He had, no doubt, traveled with him on other journeys, for we find, by 2 Timothy 4:20, that he was obliged to leave him sick at Miletus, being then, as it is likely, on his return to his own kindred at Ephesus.

**Verse 5. *Tarried for us at Troas.***— See the preceding verse. Troas was a small town in Phrygia Minor, in the province called the Troad: see Acts 16:8.

**Verse 6. *Days of unleavened bread***— The seven days of the passover, in which they ate unleavened bread. See the account of this festival in the notes on Exodus 12:1-51. It is evident, from the manner in which St. Luke writes here, that he had not been with St. Paul since the time he accompanied him to Philippi, Acts 16:10-12; but he now embarks at Philippi with the apostle, and accompanies him to Troas, and continues with him through the rest of his journey.

***To Troas in five days***— So long they were making this voyage from Philippi, being obliged to keep always by the coast, and in sight of the land; for the magnetic needle was not yet known. See the situation of these places upon the map.

**Verse 7. *Upon the first day of the week***— What was called **κυριακη**, the Lord's day, the Christian Sabbath, in which they commemorated the resurrection of our Lord; and which, among all Christians, afterwards took the place of the Jewish Sabbath.

***To break bread***— To break (Syriac) eucaristia, the eucharist, as the Syriac has it; intimating, by this, that they were accustomed to receive the holy sacrament on each Lord's day. It is likely that, besides this, they received a common meal together. Some think the **αγαπη**, or love feast, is intended.

***Continued his speech until midnight.***— At what time he began to preach we cannot tell, but we hear when he concluded. He preached during the



whole night, for he did not leave off till the break of the next day, Acts 20:11, though about midnight his discourse was interrupted by the fall of Eutychus. As this was about the time of pentecost, and we may suppose about the beginning of May, as Troas was in about 40 degrees of north latitude, the sun set there at seven P.M. and rose at five A.M., so that the night was about eight hours long; and taking all the interruptions together, and they could not have amounted to more than two hours, and taking no account of the preceding day's work, Paul must have preached a sermon not less than six hours long. But it is likely that a good part of this time was employed in hearing and answering questions; for *διελεγετο*, and *διαλεγομενου*, may be thus understood.

**Verse 8. *Upper chamber***— It was in an upper chamber in the temple that the primitive disciples were accustomed to meet: on that account, they might have preferred an upper chamber whenever they could meet with it. The pious Quesnel supposes that the smoke, issuing from the many lamps in this upper chamber, was the cause of Eutychus falling asleep; and this, he says, the apostle mentions, in charity, to excuse the young man's appearing negligent.

**Verse 9. *There sat in a window***— This was probably an opening in the wall, to let in light and air, for there was no glazing at that time; and it is likely that Eutychus fell backward through it, down to the ground, on the outside; there being nothing to prevent his falling out, when he had once lost the power to take care of himself, by getting into a deep sleep.

**Verse 10. *And Paul-fell on him***— *επεπεσεν αυτω*, Stretched himself upon him, in the same manner as Elisha did on the Shunammite's son, 2 Kings 4:33-35; though the action of lying on him, in order to communicate warmth to the flesh, might not have been continued so long as in the above instance; nor indeed was it necessary, as the natural warmth had not yet left the body of Eutychus; but the son of the Shunammite had been some time dead.

**Verse 11. *Had broken bread***— Had taken some refreshment, in order to their journey.

***And talked a long while***— *ομιλησας*, Having familiarly conversed, for this is the import of the word, which is very different from the *διελεγετο*,

of the seventh verse, and the *διαλεγόμενον*, of the ninth; which imply solemn, grave discourse.

**Verse 13. *Sailed unto Assos***— Assos, according to Pausanias, Eliac. ii. 4, and Pliny, Hist. Nat. xxxvi. 27, was a maritime town of Asia, in the Troad. Strabo and Stephanus place it in Mysia. It was also called Apollonia, according to Pliny, Ib. lib. v. 30. The passage by sea to this place was much longer than by land; and therefore St. Paul chose to go by land, while the others went by sea.

***Intending to take in Paul***— *αναλαμβάνειν*, To take him in AGAIN; for it appears he had already been aboard that same vessel: probably the same that had carried them from Philippi to Troas, Acts 20:6.

**Verse 14. *Came to Mitylene***.— This was a seaport town in the isle of Lesbos: see its place in the map.

**Verse 15. *Over against Chios***— This was a very celebrated island between Lesbos and Samos, famous in antiquity for its extraordinary wines. At this island the apostle did not touch.

***Arrived at Samos***— This was another island of the AEgean Sea, or Archipelago. It does not appear that they landed at Samos: they passed close by it, and anchored at Trogyllium. This was a promontory of Ionia, which gave name to some small islands in the vicinity of Samos: *της δε τρογυλίου προκειται νησιον ομωνυμον*: before Trogyllium is situated an island of the same name. Strabo, lib. xiv. p. 635. Pliny also mentions this place, Hist. Nat. lib. v. cap. 31. Near this place was the mouth of the famous river Maeander.

***Came to Miletus***.— A celebrated city in the province of Caria, about twelve or fifteen leagues from Ephesus, according to Calmet. Miletus is famous for being the birthplace of Thales, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and founder of the Ionic sect of philosophers. Anaximander was also born here, and several other eminent men. The Turks, who lately possessed it, call it Melas.

**Verse 16. *To sail by Ephesus***— Not to touch there at this time.

***To be at Jerusalem the day of pentecost***.— That he might have the opportunity of preaching the kingdom of God to multitudes of Jews from

different places, who would come up to Jerusalem at that feast; and then he no doubt expected to see there a renewal of that day of pentecost in which the Spirit was poured out on the disciples, and in consequence of which so many were converted to God.

**Verse 17. *He sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church.***— These are called **ἐπισκοποι**, bishops, Acts 20:28. By the **πρεσβυτεροι**, presbyters or elders, here, we are to understand all that were in authority in the Church, whether they were **ἐπισκοποι**, bishops or overseers, or seniors in years, knowledge, and experience. The **πρεσβυτεροι**, or elders, were probably the first order in the Church; an order which was not so properly constituted, but which rose out of the state of things. From these presbuteroi the episcopoi, overseers or superintendents, were selected. Those who were eldest in years, Christian knowledge, and experience, would naturally be preferred to all others, as overseers of the Church of Christ. From the Greek word **πρεσβυτερος**, comes the Latin presbyterus, the English presbyter, the French prestre, and our own term priest; and all, when traced up to their original, signify merely an elderly or aged person; though it soon became the name of an office, rather than of a state of years. Now, as these elders are called **ἐπισκοποι**, bishops, in Acts 20:28, we may take it for granted that they were the same order; or, rather, that these superintendents of the Church were indifferently called either presbyters or bishops.

As he had not time to call at Ephesus, he thought it best to have a general convocation of the heads of that Church, to meet him at Miletus, that he might give them the instructions mentioned in the succeeding parts of this chapter.

**Verse 18. *After what manner I have been with you***— The Codex Bezae adds here, for three years, and even more, which reading might have been borrowed from Acts 20:31, though the time assigned by it is too long.

**Verse 19. *Serving the Lord with all humility***, etc.— This relates not only to his zealous and faithful performance of his apostolic functions, but also to his private walk as a Christian; and shows with what carefulness this apostle himself was obliged to walk, in order to have his calling and election, as a Christian, ratified and made firm.

**Verse 20. *I kept back nothing***— Notwithstanding the dangers to which he was exposed, and the temptations he must have had to suppress those truths that were less acceptable to the unrenewed nature of man, or to the particular prejudices of the Jews and the Gentiles, he fully and faithfully, at all hazards, declared what he terms, Acts 20:27, the whole counsel of God. “Behold here,” says the judicious and pious Calmet, “the model of a good shepherd—full of doctrine and zeal: he communicates with profusion, and yet with discretion, without jealousy and without fear, what God had put in his heart, and what charity inspires. A good shepherd, says St. Bernard, should always have abundance of bread in his scrip, and his dog under command. His dog is his zeal, which he must lead, order, and moderate; his scrip full of bread is his mind full of useful knowledge; and he should ever be in readiness to give nourishment to his flock.” He who will quarrel with this sentiment, because of the uncouthness of the simile, needs pity, and deserves censure.

**Verse 21. *Testify both to-Jews and-Greeks***— He always began with the Jews; and, in this case, he had preached to them alone for three months, Acts 19:8-10, and only left their synagogues when he found, through their obstinacy, he could do them no good.

***Repentance toward God***, etc.— As all had sinned against God, so all should humble themselves before him against whom they have sinned; but humiliation is no atonement for sin; therefore repentance is insufficient, unless faith in our Lord Jesus Christ accompany it. Repentance disposes and prepares the soul for pardoning mercy; but can never be considered as making compensation for past acts of transgression. This repentance and faith were necessary to the salvation both of Jews and Gentiles; for all had sinned, and come short of God’s glory. The Jews must repent, who had sinned so much, and so long, against light and knowledge. The Gentiles must repent, whose scandalous lives were a reproach to man. Faith in Jesus Christ was also indispensably necessary; for a Jew might repent, be sorry for his sin, and suppose that, by a proper discharge of his religious duty, and bringing proper sacrifices, he could conciliate the favor of God: No, this will not do; nothing but faith in Jesus Christ, as the end of the law, and the great and only vicarious sacrifice, will do; hence he testified to them the necessity of faith in this Messiah. The Gentiles might repent of their profligate lives, turn to the true God, and renounce all idolatry: this is

well, but it is not sufficient: they also have sinned, and their present amendment and faith can make no atonement for what is past; therefore, they also must believe on the Lord Jesus, who died for their sins, and rose again for their justification.

**Verse 22. *I go bound in the spirit***— δεδεμενος τω πνευματι—Either meaning the strong influence of the Divine Spirit upon his mind, or the strong propensity in his own will, wish, and desire, to visit Jerusalem; and in this sense δεειν, to bind, is sometimes used. But it appears more consistent with the mind of the apostle, and with that influence under which we find that he constantly acted, to refer it to the influence of the Holy Ghost; υπο του πνευματος, being under the power of that Spirit; as if he had said: “I have now no choice—God has not left me either to the advices of friends, or to my own prudence: the Spirit of God obliges me to go to Jerusalem, and yet does not intimate to me what peculiar trials shall befall me there: I have only the general intimation that, in every city where I proclaim the Gospel, bonds and afflictions await me.” This sense of the word Kypke has largely defended in his note here.

**Verse 24. *None of these things move me***— ουδενος λογον ποιουμαι; I consider them as nothing; I value them not a straw; they weigh not with me.

***Neither count I my life dear***— I am not my own; my life and being are the Lord’s; he requires me to employ them in his service; I act under his direction, and am not anxious about the issue.

***Finish my course with joy***— τον δρομον μου, My ministerial function. We have already met with this word in application to the same subject, Acts 13:25, where see the note. And the apostle here adds, by way of explanation, και την διακονιαν, even that ministry which I have received of the Lord. The words μετα χαρας, with joy, are omitted by ABD, some others; the Syriac, Erpen, Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Vulgate, and some of the fathers. If we consider them as genuine they may imply thus much: that the apostle wished to fulfill his ministry in such a way as might meet with the Divine approbation; for nothing could give him joy that did not please and glorify God.

**To testify**— διαμαρτυρασθαι, Earnestly, solemnly, and strenuously to assert, vindicate, and prove the Gospel of the grace of God, not only to be in itself what it professes to be, but to be also the power of God for salvation to every one that believes.

**Verse 25. *Ye all-shall see my face no more.***— This probably refers simply to the persons who were now present; concerning whom he might have had a Divine intimation, that they should not be found in life when he should come that way again. Or it may refer only to Ephesus and Miletus. From the dangers to which he was exposed, it was, humanly speaking, unlikely that he should ever return; and this may be all that is implied: but that he did revisit those parts, though probably not Miletus or Ephesus, appears likely from Philippians 1:25-27; 2:24; Philemon 22; Hebrews 13:19-23. But in all these places he speaks with a measure of uncertainty: he had not an absolute evidence that he should not return; but, in his own mind, it was a matter of uncertainty. The Holy Spirit did not think proper to give him a direct revelation on this point.

**Verse 26. *I am pure from the blood of all***— If any man, Jew or Gentile, perish in his sins, his blood shall be upon him; he, alone, shall be accessory to his own perdition. I am blameless, because I have fully shown to both the way to escape from every evil.

**Verse 27. *I have not shunned to declare***— ου υπεστιλαμην, I have not suppressed or concealed any thing, through fear or favor, that might be beneficial to your souls. This is properly the meaning of the original word. See the note on Acts 20:20.

**All the counsel of God.**— All that God has determined and revealed concerning the salvation of man—the whole doctrine of Christ crucified, with repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus as the Messiah and great atoning Priest. In Isaiah 9:6, Jesus Christ is called the wonderful counsellor, פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ Pele Poets, which the Septuagint translate μεγαλης βουλης αγγελος· The messenger of the great counsel. To this the apostle may have referred, as we well know that this version was constantly under his eye. Declaring therefore to them the whole counsel of God, πασην την βουλην του θεου, the whole of that counsel or design of God, was, in effect, declaring the whole that concerned the Lord Jesus, who was the messenger of this counsel.

**Verse 28. *Made you overseers***— **εθετο επισκοπους**, Appointed you bishops; for so we translate the original word in most places where it occurs: but overseers, or inspectors, is much more proper, from **επι**, over, and **σκεπτομαι**, I look. The persons who examine into the spiritual state of the flock of God, and take care to lead them in and out, and to find them pasture, are termed episcopoi, or superintendents. The office of a bishop is from God; a true pastor only can fulfill this office: it is an office of most awful responsibility; few there are who can fill it; and, of those who occupy this high and awful place, perhaps we may say there are fewer still who discharge the duties of it. There are, however, through the good providence of God, Christian bishops, who, while they are honored by the calling, do credit to the sacred function. And the annals of our Church can boast of at least as many of this class of men, who have served their God and their generation, as of any other order, in the proportion which this order bears to others in the Church of Christ. That bishop and presbyter, or elder, were at this time of the same order, and that the word was indifferently used of both, see noticed on Acts 20:17.

***Feed the Church of God***— This verse has been the subject of much controversy, particularly in reference to the term **θεου**, of GOD, in this place; and concerning it there is great dissension among the MSS. and versions. Three readings exist in them, in reference to which critics and commentators have been much divided; viz. **εκκλησιαν του θεου**, the Church of GOD; **του κυριου**, of the LORD; **κυριου και θεου**, of the LORD and GOD. From the collections of Wetstein and Griesbach, it appears that but few MSS., and none of them very ancient, have the word **θεου**, of GOD; with these only the Vulgate, and the later Syriac in the text, agree. **κυριου**, of the LORD, is the reading of ACDE, several others, the Sahidic, Coptic, later Syriac in the margin, Armenian, AETHiopia, and some of the fathers. **κυριου και θεου**, of the LORD and of GOD, is the reading of the great majority; though the most ancient are for **κυριου**, of the LORD: on this ground Griesbach has admitted this reading into the text, and put **κυριου και θεου** in the margin, as being next in authority.

Mr. Wakefield, who was a professed and conscientious Unitarian, decides for **του θεου**, of GOD, as the true reading; but, instead of translating **του ιδιου αιματος**, with his own blood, he translates, by his own Son, and brings some passages from the Greek and Roman writers to show that

αἷμα and sanguis are used to signify son, or near relative; and, were this the only place where purchasing with his own blood occurred, we might receive this saying; but, as the redemption of man is, throughout the New Testament, attributed to the sacrificial death of Christ, it is not likely that this very unusual meaning should apply here. At all events, we have here a proof that the Church was purchased by the blood of Christ; and, as to his Godhead, it is sufficiently established in many other places. When we grant that the greater evidence appears to be in favor of τοῦ κυρίου, feed the Church of the Lord, which he has purchased with his own blood, we must maintain that, had not this Lord been GOD, his blood could have been no purchase for the souls of a lost world.

**Verse 29. *After my departing***— Referring, most likely, to his death; for few of these evils took place during his life.

***Grievous wolves***— Persons professing to be teachers; Judaizing Christians, who, instead of feeding the flock, would feed themselves, even to the oppression and ruin of the Church.

**Verse 30. *Also of your own selves***, etc.— From out of your own assembly shall men arise, speaking perverse things, teaching for truth what is erroneous in itself, and perverse of the genuine doctrine of Christ crucified.

***To draw away disciples***— To make schisms or rents in the Church, in order to get a party to themselves. See, here, the cause of divisions in the Church: 1. The superintendents lose the life of God, neglect the souls of the people, become greedy of gain, and, by secular extortions, oppress the people. 2. The members of the Church, thus neglected, oppressed, and irritated, get their minds alienated from their rapacious pastors. 3. Men of sinister views take advantage of this state of distraction, foment discord, preach up the necessity of division, and thus the people become separated from the great body, and associate with those who profess to care for their souls, and who disclaim all secular views. In this state of distraction, it is a high proof of God's love to his heritage, if one be found who, possessing the true apostolic doctrine and spirit, rises up to call men back to the primitive truth, and restore the primitive discipline. How soon the grievous wolves and perverse teachers arose in the Churches of Asia Minor, the first chapters of the Apocalypse inform us. The Nicolaitans



had nearly ruined the Church of Ephesus, Revelation 1:2, 6. The same sect, with other false teachers, infested the Church of Pergamos, and preached there the doctrine of Balaam, Revelation 2:14, 15. A false prophetess seduced the Church of Thyatira, Revelation 2:20. All these Churches were in Asia Minor, and probably bishops or ministers from each were present at this convocation.

**Verse 31. *Therefore watch, and remember***— The only way to abide in the truth is to watch against evil, and for good; and to keep in mind the heavenly doctrines originally received. Unwatchfulness and forgetfulness are two grand inlets to apostasy.

***By the space of three years***— **τριετιαν**. The Greek word here does not necessarily mean three whole years: it may be months more or less. In Acts 19:8, 10, we have an account of his spending two years and three months among them; probably this is all that is intended. One MS., perceiving that the time of three years was not completed, inserts **διετιαν**, the space of two years.

**Verse 32. *I commend you to God***— Instead of **τω θεω**, to GOD, several MSS. have **τω κυριω**, to the LORD; neither reading makes any difference in the sense.

***And to the word of his grace***— The doctrine of salvation by Christ Jesus.

***Which is able to build you up***— The foundation is Jesus Christ; God is the great master-builder; the doctrine of his grace, or mercy, points out the order and manner, as well as the extent, etc., of this building. Let us observe the order of these things: The soul of man, which was formerly the habitation of God, is now in a state of ruin. 2. The ruins of this soul must be repaired, that it may again become a habitation of God through the Spirit. 3. Jesus Christ is the only foundation on which this house can be rebuilt. 4. The doctrine of God's grace is the model, or plan, according to which the building can be raised. 5. When re-edified, each is to be a lively temple of the Lord, made inwardly pure and outwardly righteous, and thus prepared for a state of bliss. 6. Being made children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and sanctified by his Spirit, they have a right to the heavenly inheritance; for only the children of the family can possess the celestial estate. Thus we find they must be saved by grace, and be made

thereby children of God; be sanctified by his Spirit; and, then, being prepared for, they are removed, in due time, into the heavenly inheritance.

**Verse 33. *I have coveted no man's silver***, etc.— And from this circumstance they would be able to discover the grievous wolves, and the perverters; for these had nothing but their own interests in view; whereas the genuine disciples of Christ neither coveted nor had worldly possessions. St. Paul's account of his own disinterestedness is very similar to that given by Samuel of his, 1 Samuel 12:3-5.

**Verse 34. *These hands have ministered***, etc.— It was neither “sin nor discredit” for the apostle to work to maintain himself, when the circumstances of the Church were such that it could not support him. Still many eminent ministers of God are obliged to support themselves and their families, at least in part, in the same way, while indefatigably testifying the Gospel of the grace of God. Whatever it may be to the people, it is no cause of reproach to the minister, to be obliged thus to employ himself.

**Verse 35. *I have showed you all things***— The preposition **κατα** is to be understood before **παντα**; and the clause should be read thus-I have showed you **IN** all things, etc.

***It is more blessed to give than to receive***.— That is, the giver is more happy than the receiver. Where, or on what occasion, our Lord spake these words we know not, as they do not exist in any of the four evangelists. But that our Lord did speak them, St. Paul's evidence is quite sufficient to prove. The sentiment is worthy of Christ. A truly generous mind, in affluence, rejoices in opportunities to do good, and feels happy in having such opportunities. A man of an independent spirit, when reduced to poverty, finds it a severe trial to be obliged to live on the bounty of another, and feels pain in receiving what the other feels a happiness in communicating. Let, therefore, the man who is able to give feel himself the obliged person, and think how much pain the feeling heart of his supplicant must endure, in being obliged to forego his native independence, in soliciting and receiving the bounty of another. I am not speaking of common beggars; these have got their minds already depraved, and their native independence reduced, by sin and idleness, to servility.

**Verse 36. *He kneeled down and prayed***— Kneeling is the proper posture of a supplicant, it argues at once both humility and submission; and he who prays to God should endeavor to feel the utmost measures of both.

**Verse 37. *Fell on Paul's neck***— Leaned their heads against his shoulders, and kissed his neck. This was not an unusual custom in the east.

**Verse 38. *That they should see his face no more***— This was a most solemn meeting, and a most affecting parting. The man who had first pointed out to them the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they had been brought into so glorious a state of salvation, is now going away, in all likelihood, to be seen no more till the day in which the quick and dead shall stand before the throne of judgment. Such a scene, and its correspondent feelings, are more easily imagined than described.

1. As the disciples are stated to have come together on the first day of the week, we may learn from this that, ever since the apostolic times, the Lord's day, now the Christian Sabbath, was set apart for religious exercises; such as the preaching of God's holy word, and celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Besides its being the day on which our blessed Lord rose from the dead, the practice of the apostles and the primitive Church is an additional reason why we should religiously celebrate this first day of the week. They who, professing the Christian religion, still prefer the Jewish Sabbath, have little to support them in the New Testament. How prone is man to affect to be wise above what is written, while he is, in almost every respect, below the teaching so plainly laid down in the Divine word.

2. The charge of St. Paul to the pastors of the Church of Christ at Ephesus and Miletus contains much that is interesting to every Christian minister:

1. If he be sent of God at all, he is sent to feed the flock. 2. But, in order to feed them, he must have the bread of life. 3. This bread he must distribute in its due season, that each may have that portion that is suitable to time, place, and state. 4. While he is feeding others, he should take care to have his own soul fed: it is possible for a minister to be the instrument of feeding others, and yet starve himself. 5. If Jesus Christ intrust to his care the souls he has bought by his own blood, what an awful account will he have to give in the day of judgment, if any of them perish through his neglect! Though the sinner, dying in his sins, has his own blood upon his

head, yet, if the watchman has not faithfully warned him, his blood will be required at the watchman's hand. Let him who is concerned read Ezekiel, Ezekiel 33:3-5, and think of the account which he is shortly to give unto God.

3. Tenderness and sympathy are not inconsistent with the highest state of grace. Paul warns his hearers day and night with tears. His hearers now weep sore at the departure of their beloved pastor. They who can give up a Christian minister with indifference, have either profited little under that ministry, or they have backslidden from the grace of God. The pastors should love as fathers, the converts as children; and all feel themselves one family, under that great head, Christ Jesus.

## CHAPTER 21.

*Paul and his company sail from Miletus, and come to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara, 1. Finding a Phoenician ship at Patara, they go on board, sail past Cyprus, and land at Tyre, 2, 3. Here they find disciples, and stay seven days, and are kindly entertained, 4, 5. Having bade the disciples farewell, they take ship and sail to Ptolemais, salute the brethren, stay with them one day, come to Caesarea, and lodge with Philip, one of the seven deacons, 6-9. Here they tarry a considerable time, and Agabus the prophet foretells Paul's persecution at Jerusalem, 10, 11. The disciples endeavor to dissuade him from going; but he is resolute, and he and his company depart, 12-16. They are kindly received by James and the elders, who advise Paul, because of the Jews, to show his respect for the law of Moses, by purifying himself, with certain others that were under a vow; with which advice he complies, 17-26. Some of the Asiatic Jews, finding him in the temple, raise an insurrection against him, and would have killed him had he not been rescued by the chief captain, who orders him to be bound and carried into the castle, 27-36. Paul requests liberty to address the people, and is permitted, 37-40.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 21.

**Verse 1.** *Came with a straight course*— Having had, as is necessarily implied, wind and tide in their favor.

**Coos**— An island in the Archipelago, or AEgean Sea, one of those called the Sporades. It was famous for the worship of AEsculapius and Juno; and for being the birthplace of Hippocrates, the most eminent of physicians, and Apelles, the most celebrated of painters.

**Rhodes**— Another island in the same sea, celebrated for its Colossus, which was one of the seven wonders of the world. This was a brazen statue of Apollo, so high that ships in full sail could pass between its legs. It was the work of Chares, a pupil of Lysippus, who spent twelve years in making it. It was 106 feet high, and so great that few people could fathom its thumb. It was thrown down by an earthquake about 224 years

before Christ, after having stood sixty-six years. When the Saracens took possession of this island, they sold this prostrate image to a Jew, who loaded 900 camels with the brass of it; this was about A.D. 660, nearly 900 years after it had been thrown down.

**Patara**— One of the chief seaport towns of Syria.

**Verse 2. Phoenicia**— A part of Syria. See the note on Acts 11:19.

**Verse 3. Cyprus**— See the note on Acts 4:36, and see the track of this journey on the map.

**Tyre**— A city of Phoenicia, one of the most celebrated maritime towns in the world. See the notes on Acts 12:20; Matthew 11:21.

**There the ship was to unlade her burden.**— The freight that she had taken in at Ephesus she was to unlade at Tyre; to which place she was bound.

**Verse 4. Who said to Paul through the Spirit**— We cannot understand this as a command from the Holy Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem, else Paul must have been highly criminal to have disobeyed it. Through the Spirit, must either refer to their own great earnestness to dissuade him from taking a journey which they plainly saw would be injurious to him—and so Bp. Pearce understands this place; or, if it refer to the Holy Spirit, it must mean that if he regarded his personal safety he must not, at this time, go up to Jerusalem. The Spirit foretold Paul's persecutions, but does not appear to have forbidden his journey; and Paul was persuaded that, in acting as he was about to do, whatever personal risk he ran, he should bring more glory to God, by going to Jerusalem, than by tarrying at Tyre or elsewhere. The purport of this Divine communication was, "If thou go up to Jerusalem the Jews will persecute thee; and thou wilt be imprisoned, etc." As he was apprized of this, he might have desisted, for the whole was conditional: Paul might or might not go to Jerusalem; if he did go, he would be persecuted, and be in danger of losing his life. The Holy Spirit neither commanded him to go, nor forbade him; the whole was conditional; and he was left to the free exercise of his own judgment and conscience. This was a similar case to that of David in Keilah, 1 Samuel 23:9-13. David prevented the threatened evil by leaving Keilah: Paul fell into it by going to Jerusalem.

**Verse 5. *When we had accomplished those days***— That is, the seven days mentioned in the preceding verse.

***And they all brought us on our way, with wives and children***— It is not likely that Paul, Silas, Luke, etc., had either wives or children with them; and it is more natural to suppose that the brethren of Tyre, with their wives and children are those that are meant; these, through affection to the apostles, accompanied them from their homes to the ship; and the coming out of the husbands, wives, and children, shows what a general and affectionate interest the preaching and private conversation of these holy men had excited.

***Kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.***— As God fills heaven and earth, so he may be worshipped every where; as well, when circumstances require it, on the seashore as in the temple. We have already seen, in the case of Lydia, that the Jews had proseuchas by the river sides, etc.; and an observation in Tertullian seems to intimate that they preferred such places, and in the open air offered their petitions to God by the seashore: *Omissis templis, per omne littus, quocumque in aperto aliquando jam preces ad coelum mittunt.* Tertul. de Jejunio.

**Verse 6. *Taken-leave***— *απασάμενοι*; Having given each other the kiss of peace, as was the constant custom of the Jews and primitive Christians.

***They returned home***— That is, the men, their wives, and their children.

**Verse 7. *We came to Ptolemais***— This was a seaport town of Galilee, not far from Mount Carmel, between Tyre and Caesarea, where the river Belus empties itself into the sea. It was at first called Accho, (and this is the reading of the Syriac and Arabic,) and belonged to the tribe of Asher, Judges 1:31; it was enlarged and beautified by the first of the Egyptian Ptolemies, from whom it was called Ptolemais. This place terminated St. Paul's voyage; and this is what is expressed in the text: And we came from Tyre to Ptolemais, where our voyage ended. See the Greek text.

**Verse 8. *We that were of Paul's company***— *οι περι τον παυλον*. This clause is wanting in ABCE, and many others; the Syriac, Coptic, Vulgate, Armenian, etc.

***Came unto Caesarea***— This was Caesarea of Palestine, already sufficiently described, See on Acts 8:40.

***Philip the evangelist***— One of the seven deacons, who seems to have settled here after he had baptized the eunuch. See on Acts 8:40.

**Verse 9. *Four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy***.— Probably these were no more than teachers in the Church: for we have already seen that this is a frequent meaning of the word prophesy; and this is undoubtedly one thing intended by the prophecy of Joel, quoted Acts 2:17, 18, of this book. If Philip's daughters might be prophetesses, why not teachers?

**Verse 10. *Agabus***.— See the note on Acts 11:28.

**Verse 11. *Took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands***, etc.— This was no doubt a prophet, in the commonly received sense of the term; and his mode of acting was like that of the ancient prophets, who often accompanied their predictions with significant emblems. Jeremiah was commanded to bury his girdle by the river Euphrates, to mark out the captivity of the Jews. Jeremiah 13:4. For more examples of this figurative or symbolical prophesying, see Jeremiah 27:2, 3; 28:4; Isaiah 20:1-6; Ezekiel 4:1-17; 12:1-28, etc.

***Into the hands of the Gentiles***.— That is, the Romans, for the Jews had not, properly speaking, the power of life and death. And, as Agabus said he should be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, he showed thereby that they would attempt to destroy his life. This prediction of Agabus was literally fulfilled: see Acts 21:33.

**Verse 12. *Besought him not to go up to Jerusalem***.— For they all understood the prophecy to be conditional and contingent; and that it was in Paul's power to turn the scale.

**Verse 13. *I am ready, not to be bound only***— He was resolute and determined; but was under no constraining necessity. See the note on Acts 21:4.

**Verse 14. *The will of the Lord be done***.— May that which is most for his glory take place! They plainly saw from the prophecy what would take place, if Paul went to Jerusalem; and every one saw that he had power to go, or not to go.



**Verse 15. *Took up our carriages***— *αποσκευασαμενοι*; We made ourselves ready; packed up our things; got our baggage in order. This is what the text means.

**Verse 16. *And brought with them one Mnason***, etc.— It is not very likely that they would bring a man with them with whom they were to lodge in Jerusalem; therefore, the text should perhaps be read as Bp. Patrick proposes: There went with us certain of the disciples of Caesarea, bringing us to one Mnason, with whom we were to lodge. This is most likely, as the text will bear this translation. But it is possible that Mnason, formerly of Cyprus, now an inhabitant of Jerusalem, might have been down at Caesarea, met the disciples, and invited them to lodge with him while they were at Jerusalem; and, having transacted his business at Caesarea, might now accompany them to Jerusalem. His being an old disciple may either refer to his having been a very early convert, probably one of those on the day of pentecost, or to his being now an old man.

**Verse 18. *Went in with us unto James***— This was James the Less, son of Mary; and cousin to our Lord. He appears to have been bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, and perhaps the only apostle who continued in that city. We have already seen what a very important character he sustained in the council. See Acts 15:13.

***All the elders were present***.— It appears that they had been convened about matters of serious and important moment; and some think it was relative to Paul himself, of whose arrival they had heard, and well knew how many of those that believed were disaffected towards him.

**Verse 19. *Declared particularly***, etc.— He no doubt had heard that they were prejudiced against him; and, by declaring what God had done by him among the Gentiles, showed how groundless this prejudice was: for, were he a bad man, or doing any thing that he should not do, God would not have made him such a singular instrument of so much good.

**Verse 20. *How many thousands***— *ποσαι μυριαδες*; How many myriads, how many times 10,000. This intimates that there had been a most extraordinary and rapid work even among the Jews; but what is here spoken is not to be confined to the Jews of Jerusalem, but to all that had come from different parts of the land to be present at this pentecost.

***They are all zealous of the law***— The Jewish economy was not yet destroyed; nor had God as yet signified that the whole of its observances were done away. He continued to tolerate that dispensation, which was to be in a certain measure in force till the destruction of Jerusalem; and from that period it was impossible for them to observe their own ritual. Thus God abolished the Mosaic dispensation, by rendering, in the course of his providence, the observance of it impossible.

**Verse 21. *Thou teachest to forsake Moses***, etc.— From any thing that appears in the course of this book to the contrary, this information was incorrect: we do not find Paul preaching thus to the Jews. It is true that, in his epistles, some of which had been written before this time, he showed that circumcision and uncircumcision were equally unavailable for the salvation, of the soul, and that by the deeds of the law no man could be justified; but he had not yet said to any Jew, forsake Moses, and do not circumcise your children. He told them that Jesus Christ had delivered them from the yoke of the law; but they had, as yet, liberty to wear that yoke, if they pleased. He had shown them that their ceremonies were useless but not destructive; that they were only dangerous when they depended on them for salvation. This is the sum of what Paul had taught on this subject.

**Verse 22. *The multitude must needs come together***— Whether this refers to a regular convocation of the Church, or to a tumult that would infallibly take place when it was heard that the apostle was come, we cannot pretend to say; but it is evident that James and the elders wished some prudent steps to be taken, in order to prevent an evil that they had too much reason to fear.

**Verse 23. *We have four men which have a vow***— From the shaving of the head, mentioned immediately after, it is evident that the four men in question were under the vow of Nazariteship; and that the days of their vow were nearly at an end, as they were about to shave their heads; for, during the time of the Nazariteship, the hair was permitted to grow, and only shaven off at the termination of the vow. Among the Jews, it was common to make vows to God on extraordinary occasions; and that of the Nazarite appears to have been one of the most common; and it was permitted by their law for any person to perform this vow by proxy. See

the law produced in my note on Numbers 6:21. “It was also customary for the richer sort to bestow their charity on the poorer sort for this purpose; for Josephus, Ant. lib. xix. cap. 6, sec. 1, observes that Agrippa, on his being advanced from a prison to a throne, by the Emperor Claudius, came to Jerusalem; and there, among other instances of his religious thankfulness shown in the temple, *ναζαραίων ξυρασθαι διεταξε μαλα συχνους*, he ordered very many Nazarites to be shaven, he furnishing them with money for the expenses of that, and of the sacrifices necessarily attending it.” See Bp. Pearce.

**Verse 24. *Be at charges with them***— Or, rather, be at charges for them: help them to bear the expense of that vow. Eight lambs, four rams, besides oil, flour, etc., were the expenses on this occasion. See the notes on Numbers 6:1-21.

***Thou-walkest orderly and keepest the law***.— Perhaps this advice meant no more than, Show them, by such means as are now in thy power, that thou art not an enemy to Moses; that thou dost still consider the law to be holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Paul did so, and bore the expenses of those who, from a scruple of conscience, had made a vow, and perhaps were not well able to bear the expense attending it. Had they done this in order to acquire justification through the law, Paul could not have assisted them in any measure with a clear conscience; but, as he did assist them, it is a proof that they had not taken this vow on them for this purpose. Indeed, vows rather referred to a sense of obligation, and the gratitude due to God for mercies already received, than to the procuring of future favors of any kind. Besides, God had not yet fully shown that the law was abolished, as has already been remarked: he tolerated it till the time that the iniquity of the Jews was filled up; and then, by the destruction of Jerusalem, he swept every rite and ceremony of the Jewish law away, with the besom of destruction.

**Verse 25. *As touching the Gentiles***— See the notes on Acts 15:1-21, and the additional observations at the end of that chapter. {Acts 15:41}

**Verse 26. *To signify the accomplishment***, etc.— *διαγγελλων*, Declaring the accomplishment, etc. As this declaration was made to the priest, the sense of the passage is the following, if we suppose Paul to have made an offering for himself, as well as the four men: “The next day, Paul, taking

the four men, began to purify, set himself apart, or consecrate himself with them; entering into the temple, he publicly declared to the priests that he would observe the separation of a Nazarite, and continue it for seven days, at the end of which he would bring an offering for himself and the other four men, according to what the law prescribed in that case.” But it is likely that Paul made no offering for himself, but was merely at the expense of theirs. However we may consider this subject, it is exceedingly difficult to account for the conduct of James and the elders, and of Paul on this occasion. There seems to have been something in this transaction which we do not fully understand. See the note on Numbers 6:21.

“Besides their typical and religious use, sacrifices were also intended for the support of the state and civil government; inasmuch as the ministers of state were chiefly maintained by them: so that the allotments to the priests out of the sacrifices may be considered as designed, like the civil-list money in other nations, for the immediate support of the crown and the officers of state. On these principles we are able to account for Paul’s sacrificing, as we are informed he did, after the commencement of the Christian dispensation; an action which has been severely censured by some as the greatest error of his life: hereby he not only gave, say they, too much countenance to the Jews in their superstitious adherence to the law of Moses, after it was abrogated by Christ, but his offering these typical sacrifices, after the antitype of them was accomplished in the sacrifice of Christ, was a virtual denial of Christ, and of the virtue of his sacrifice, which superseded all others. Paul’s long trouble, which began immediately after this affair, some have looked upon as a judgment of God upon him for this great offense. But, if this action were really so criminal as some suppose, one cannot enough wonder that so good and so wise a man as Paul was should be guilty of it; and that the Apostle James and the other Christian elders should all advise him to it, Acts 21:18, 23, 24. It is likewise strange that we find no censure ever passed on this action by any of the sacred writers; not even by Paul himself, who appears so ready, on other occasions, to acknowledge and humble himself for his errors and failings: on the contrary he reflects with comfort on his having complied with the customs of the Jews in order to remove their prejudices against him and his ministry, and against the Gospel which he preached, and to win them over to embrace it: ‘Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I

might gain the Jews; and this I do for the Gospel's sake.' 1 Corinthians 9:20, 23.

“To elucidate this point; we are to consider that there was a political as well as a typical use of sacrifices; and that, though the typical ceased upon the sacrifice of Christ, yet the political continued till God in his providence broke up the Jewish state and polity about forty years after our Saviour's death. Till that time it was not merely lawful, but matter of duty, for good subjects to pay the dues which were appointed by law for the support of the government and magistracy. Now, of this kind was the sacrifice which Paul offered; and in this view they were paid by Christians dwelling in Judea, as well as by those who still adhered to the Jewish religion. So that, upon the whole, this action, for which Paul has been so much censured, probably amounts to nothing more than paying the tribute due to the magistrate by law, which the apostle enjoins upon all other Christians in all other nations, Romans 13:6.” -Jennings' Jewish Antiquities, p. 17.

**Verse 27. *The Jews which were of Asia***— These pursued him with the most deliberate and persevering malice in every place; and it appears that it was through them that the false reports were sent to and circulated through Jerusalem.

**Verse 28. *This is the man that teacheth***, etc.— As much as if they had said: This is the man concerning whom we wrote to you; who in every place endeavors to prejudice the Gentiles against the Jews, against the Mosaic law, and against the temple and its services.

***Brought Greeks also into the temple***— This was a most deliberate and malicious untruth: Paul could accomplish no purpose by bringing any Greek or Gentile into the temple; and their having seen Trophimus, an Ephesian, with him, in the city only, was no ground on which to raise a slander that must so materially affect both their lives. Josephus informs us, War, lib. v. cap. 5, sec. 2, that on the wall which separated the court of the Gentiles from that of the Israelites was an inscription in Greek and Latin letters, which stated that no stranger was permitted to come within the holy place on pain of death. With such a prohibition as this before his eyes, was it likely that St. Paul would enter into the temple in company with an uncircumcised Greek? The calumny refutes itself.

**Verse 30. *They took Paul***— They tumultuously seized on him; and drew him out of the temple, out of the court of the Israelites, where he was worshipping: and the doors were shut; the doors of the court of the Gentiles, probably to prevent Paul from getting any succor from his friends in the city; for their whole proceedings show that they purposed to murder him: they brought him out of the court of the Israelites, that court being peculiarly holy, that it might not be defiled by his blood; and they shut the court of the Gentiles, that they might have the opportunity unmolested of killing him in that place; for the court of the Gentiles was reckoned to be less holy than that of the Israelites.

**Verse 31. *The chief captain of the band***— The Roman tribune, who had a troop of soldiers under him, which lodged in general in the castle of Antonia, which was built at the angle where the northern and western porticoes of the outer court of the temple were joined together. This castle was built by John Hyrcanus, high priest of the Jews: it was at first called Baris, and was the royal residence of the Asmoneans, as long as they reigned in Jerusalem. It was beautified by Herod the Great, and called Antonia, in honor of his friend Mark Antony. By this castle the temple was commanded, as it stood on higher ground. Josephus describes this castle, War, b. v. chap. 5, sec. 8, “as having four towers, from one of which the whole temple was overlooked; and that one of the towers was joined to the porticoes of the temple, and had a double pair of stairs from it, by which soldiers in the garrison were used to come down with their arms to the porticoes, on the festival days, to keep the people quiet; for, as the temple was a guard to the city, so this castle was a guard to the temple.” “It seems, therefore,” says Bp. Pearce, “to me very plain, that the place where the Jews were about to kill Paul was the court of the Gentiles, the porticoes being there; and that the chief captain came down there to his rescue.” The name of this chief captain, or tribune, was Claudius Lysias, as we learn from Acts 23:26.

**Verse 32. *Ran down unto them***— Ran down the stairs to the porticoes mentioned above.

**Verse 33. *And took him***— With great violence, according to Acts 24:7, probably meaning an armed force.

**To be bound with two chains**— To be bound between two soldiers; his right hand chained to the left hand of the one, and his left hand to the right of the other. See the note on Acts 12:6.

**Verse 35. *And when he came upon the stairs***— Those mentioned in the note on Acts 21:31.

**Verse 36. *Away with him***.— That is, Kill him; despatch him! for so much this phrase always means in the mouth of a Jewish mob. See on Luke 23:18, and John 19:15.

**Verse 37. *Canst thou speak Greek?***— Claudius Lysias was not a Roman; he had, as himself informs us, purchased his citizenship of Rome with a great sum of money; (see Acts 22:28;) and it is very likely that he was but imperfectly acquainted with the Latin tongue; and the tumult that was now made, and the discordant noise, prevented him from clearly apprehending what was said; and, as he wished to know the merit of the cause, he accosted Paul with, ἑλληνιστι γινώσκεις, Dost thou understand Greek? And when he found that he did understand it, he proceeded to question him as below.

**Verse 38. *Art not thou that Egyptian***, etc.— The history to which Claudius Lysias refers is taken from Josephus, Ant. lib. xx. cap. 7, sec. 6, and War, lib. ii. cap. 13, sec. 5, and is in substance as follows: An Egyptian, whose name is not known, pretended to be a prophet, and told his followers that the walls of Jerusalem would fall down before them, if they would assist him in making an attack on the city. He had address enough to raise a rabble of 30,000 men, and with these advanced as far as the Mount of Olives; but Felix, the Roman governor, came suddenly upon him, with a large body of Roman troops, both infantry and cavalry: the mob was speedily dispersed, four hundred killed, two hundred taken prisoners, and the Egyptian himself, with some of his most faithful friends, escaped; of whom no account was ever afterwards heard. As Lysias found such an outcry made against Paul, he supposed that he must be some egregious malefactor, and probably that Egyptian who had escaped, as related above. Learned men agree that St. Luke refers to the same fact of which Josephus speaks; but there is a considerable difference between the numbers in Josephus, and those in Luke: the former having 30,000, the latter only 4000. The small number of killed and prisoners,

only 600 in all, according to Josephus, leads us to suspect that his number is greatly exaggerated; as 600 in killed and prisoners of a mob of 30,000, routed by regular infantry and cavalry, is no kind of proportion; but it is a sufficient proportion to a mob of 4000. Dean Aldridge has supposed that the number in Josephus was originally 4000, but that ancient copyists mistaking the Greek  $\delta$  delta, four, for  $\lambda$  lambda, thirty, wrote 30,000, instead of 4000. See Havercamp's edition, vol. ii. p. 177. There is another way of reconciling the two historians, which is this: When this Egyptian impostor at first began to make great boasts and large promises, a multitude of people, to the amount at least of 30,000, weary of the Roman yoke, from which he promised them deliverance, readily arranged themselves under his banners. As he performed nothing that he promised, 26,000 of these had melted away before he reached Mount Olivet: this remnant the Romans attacked and dispersed. Josephus speaks of the number he had in the beginning; St. Luke, of those that he had when he arrived at Mount Olivet.

*That were murderers?*—  $\sigma\iota\kappa\alpha\rho\iota\omega\nu$ : Sicarii, assassins: they derived their name from sica, a sort of crooked knife, which they concealed under their garments, and privately stabbed the objects of their malice. Josephus.

**Verse 39. *I am a man which am a Jew***— A periphrasis for, I am a Jew. See the note on Acts 7:2.

*Of Tarsus-no mean city*— In the notes on Acts 9:11, I have shown that Tarsus was a city of considerable importance, and in some measure a rival to Rome and Athens; and that, because of the services tendered to the Romans by the inhabitants, Julius Caesar endowed them with all the rights and privileges of Roman citizens. When St. Paul calls it no mean city, he speaks a language that was common to those who have had occasion to speak of Tarsus. XENOPHON, Cyri Anabas. i., calls it,  $\rho\omicron\lambda\iota\nu\ \mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha\lambda\eta\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\upsilon\delta\alpha\iota\mu\omicron\nu\alpha$ , a great and flourishing city. JOSEPHUS, Ant. lib. i. cap. 6, sec. 6, says that it was  $\pi\alpha\rho'\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omega\nu\ \rho\omicron\lambda\epsilon\omega\nu\ \eta\ \alpha\zeta\iota\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\omega\tau\alpha\tau\eta\ \mu\eta\tau\rho\omicron\pi\omicron\lambda\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\upsilon\sigma\sigma\alpha$ , the metropolis and most renowned city among them (the Cilicians.) And AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, xiv. 8, says, Ciliciam Tarsus nobilitat, urbs perspicabilis: "Tarsus, a very respectable city; adorns Cilicia."



**Verse 40. *Paul stood on the stairs***— Where he was out of the reach of the mob, and was surrounded by the Roman soldiers.

***Beckoned with the hand***— Waving the hand, which was the sign that he was about to address the people. So VIRGIL says of Turnus, when he wished, by single combat between himself and AENEAS, to put an end to the war: —

*Significatque manu, et magno simul incipit ore:  
Parcite jam, Rutuli; et vos tela inhibete, Latini.*

*He beckoned with his hand, and cried out with a loud voice,  
Desist, ye Rutulians; and, ye Latins, cease from throwing  
your javelins.*

***He spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue***— What was called then the Hebrew, viz. the Chaldalo-Syriac; very well expressed by the Codex Bezae, *τη ιδια διαλεκτω*, in their own dialect.

Never was there a more unnatural division than that in this chapter: it ends with a single comma! The best division would have been at the end of the 25th verse.

PAUL'S embarkation at Tyre is very remarkable. The simple manner in which he was escorted to the ship by the disciples of Tyre, men, women, and children, and their affectionate and pious parting, kneeling down on the shore and commending each other to God, are both impressive and edifying. Nothing but Christianity could have produced such a spirit in persons who now, perhaps for the first time, saw each other in the flesh. Every true Christian is a child of God; and, consequently, all children of God have a spiritual affinity. They are all partakers of the same Spirit, are united to the same Head, are actuated with the same hope, and are going to the same heaven. These love one another with pure hearts fervently; and these alone are capable of disinterested and lasting friendship. Though this kind of friendship cannot fail, yet it may err; and with officious affection endeavor to prevent us from bearing a necessary and most honorable cross. See Acts 21:12, 13. It should, therefore, be kept within Scriptural bounds.

## CHAPTER 22.

*Paul, in his address to the people, gives an account of his birth and education, 1-3. His prejudices against Christianity, 4, 5. And of his miraculous conversion, and call to the apostleship, 6-21. The Jews, hearing him say that God had sent him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, become exceedingly outrageous, and clamor for his life, 22, 23. The chief captain orders him to be examined by scourging; but he, pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen, escapes the torture, 24-29. The next day the chief captain brings Paul before the chief priests and their council, 30.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22.

**Verse 1. *Men, brethren, and fathers***— A Hebrew form of expression for brethren and fathers: for two classes only are addressed. See the note on Acts 7:2.

***Hear ye my defense***— μου της απολογιας, This apology of mine; in this sense the word apology was anciently understood: hence the Apologies of the primitive fathers, i.e. their defenses of the Christian religion. And this is as proper literal meaning; but it is now used only as implying an excuse for improper conduct. That this is an abuse of the term requires no proof.

**Verse 2. *When they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue***— He had probably been traduced by the Jews of Asia as a mere Gentile, distinguished only by his virulence against the Jewish religion; which virulence proceeded from his malice and ignorance.

**Verse 3. *I am verily a man which am a Jew***— A periphrasis for, I am really a Jew: and his mentioning this adds weight to the conjecture in the preceding note. He shows that he could not be ignorant of the Jewish religion, as he had had the best instructor in it which Jerusalem could produce.

**Yet brought up**, etc.— Bp. Pearce proposes that this verse should be thus read and translated: but brought up in this city; instructed at the feet of Gamaliel, according to the most exact manner, being exceedingly zealous for the law of our fathers, as ye all are this day.

**Born in Tarsus**— See the notes on Acts 9:11; 21:39.

**Feet of Gamaliel**— See a full account of this man in the note on Acts 5:34.

It has been generally supposed that the phrase, brought up at the feet, is a reference to the Jewish custom, viz. that the disciples of the rabbins sat on low seats, or on the ground, whilst the rabbin himself occupied a lofty chair. But we rather learn, from Jewish authority, that the disciples of the rabbins stood before their teachers, as Vitranga has proved in his treatise Deuteronomy Synag. Vet. lib. i. p. 1, cap. 7. Kypke, therefore, contends that **παρα τους ποδας**, at the feet, means the same as **πλησιον**, near, or before, which is not an unfrequent mode of speech among both sacred and profane writers. Thus, in Acts 4:35, 37; 5:2, **ετιθουν παρα τους ποδας των αποστολων**, they laid it at the apostles' feet, means only, they brought it to the apostles. So in 2 Macc. iv. 7, **παρα ποδας ηδη τον φοη ορωντες κειμενον**, they saw death already lying at their feet; that is, as the Syriac translator has properly rendered it, they saw death immediately before them. So Themistius, Or. 27, p. 341, who adds the term by which the phrase is explained, **εστι και πλησιον αει τω δυναμενω λαμβανειν**, ante pedes id temper et prope est, illi qui accipere potest. Also Lucian, Deuteronomy Conser. Hist. p. 669, **ων παρα ποδας οι ελεγχου**. The refutation of which is at hand. The same kind of form occurs in the Hebrew, Exodus 11:8: All the people that are at thy feet, **ברגליך** beragleica, i.e. who are with thee, under thy command, 2 Samuel 15:16. And the king went out, and all his household, **ברגליו** beraglaiv, at his feet; that is, with him, in his company. See Kypke. The phrase is used in the same sense among the Hindoos: I learned this at my father's feet—instead of, I learned it of my father. I was taught at the feet of such a teacher—my teacher's feet say so; meaning, simply, such and such persons taught me.

**According to the perfect manner**— That is, according to that strict interpretation of the law, and especially the traditions of the elders, for

which the Pharisees were remarkable. That it is Pharisaism that the apostle has in view, when he says he was taught according to, **ακριβειαν**, the most exact manner, is evident; and hence, in Acts 26:5, he calls Pharisaism **ακριβεστατην**, the most exact system; and, under it, he was zealous towards God; scrupulously exact in every part of his duty, accompanying this with reverence to the supreme Being, and deep concern for his honor and glory.

**Verse 4. *I persecuted this way***— **ταυτην την οδον**; This doctrine, the way of worshipping God, and arriving at a state of blessedness. See on Acts 9:2.

***Binding and delivering into prisons***— See on Acts 8:3; 9:2.

**Verse 5. *The high priest doth bear me witness***, etc.— He probably referred to the letters of authority which he had received from the high priest, and the whole estate of the elders, **παν το πρεσβυτεριον**, the whole of the presbytery, that is, the sanhedrin; and it is likely, that he had those letters to produce. This zeal of his against Christianity was an ample proof of his sincerity as a Pharisaical Jew.

**Verse 6. — 13. *As I made my journey***, etc.— See the whole of this account, and all the particular circumstances, considered at large in the notes on Acts 9:1, etc., and the observations at the conclusion of that chapter. {Acts 9:43}

**Verse 14. *And see that Just One***— The Lord Jesus, called the Just One, in opposition to the Jews, who crucified him as a malefactor: see the note on Acts 7:52. This is an additional proof that Jesus Christ did actually appear unto Saul of Tarsus.

**Verse 15. *Thou shalt be his witness unto all***— Thou shalt proclaim Christ crucified, both to Jews and Gentiles.

**Verse 16. *Arise, and be baptized***— Take now the profession of Christ's faith most solemnly upon thee, by being baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

***Wash away thy sins***, etc.— Let this washing of thy body represent to thee the washing away of thy sins: and know that this washing away of sin can be received only by invoking the name of the Lord.

**Verse 17. *When I was come again to Jerusalem***— It is likely that he refers to the first journey to Jerusalem, about three years after his conversion, Acts 9:25, 26, and Galatians 1:18.

***I was in a trance***— This circumstance is not mentioned any where else, unless it be that to which himself refers in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, when he conceived himself transported to the third heaven; and, if the case be the same, the appearance of Jesus Christ to him, and the command given, are circumstances related only in this place.

**Verse 19. *I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue***— This shows what an active instrument Saul of Tarsus was, in the hands of this persecuting priesthood, and how very generally the followers of Christ were persecuted, and how difficult it was at this time to profess Christianity.

**Verse 20. *When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed***— See on Acts 7:58; 8:1. All these things Paul alleged as reasons why he could not expect to be received by the Christians; for how could they suppose that such a persecutor could be converted?

**Verse 21. *I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles***.— This was the particular appointment of St. Paul: he was the apostle of the Gentiles; for, though he preached frequently to the Jews, yet to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to write for the conversion and establishment of the Gentile world, were his peculiar destination. Hence we find him and his companions travelling every where; through Judea, Phoenicia, Arabia, Syria, Cilicia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Phrygia, Macedonia, Greece, Asia, the Isles of the Mediterranean Sea, the Isles of the AEgean Sea, Italy, and some add Spain and even Britain. This was the diocess of this primitive bishop: none of the apostles traveled, none preached, none labored as this man; and, we may add, none was so greatly owned of God. The epistles of Peter, John, James, and Jude, are great and excellent; but, when compared with those of Paul, however glorious they may be, they have no glory comparatively, by reason of that glory which excelleth. Next to Jesus Christ, St. Paul is the glory of the Christian Church. Jesus is the foundation; Paul, the master-builder.

**Verse 22. *They gave him audience unto this word***— Namely, that God had sent him to the Gentiles: not that they refused to preach the law to the

Gentiles, and make them proselytes; for this they were fond of doing, so that our Lord says, they compassed sea and land to make a proselyte; but they understood the apostle as stating that God had rejected them, and called the Gentiles to be his peculiar people in their place; and this they could not bear.

***Away with such a fellow***— According to the law of Moses, he who attempted to seduce the people to any strange worship was to be stoned, Deuteronomy 13:15. The Jews wished to insinuate that the apostle was guilty of this crime, and that therefore he should be stoned, or put to death.

**Verse 23. *Cast off their clothes***— Bishop Pearce supposes that shaking their upper garments is all that is meant here; and that it was an ancient custom for men to do so when highly pleased or greatly irritated; but it is likely that some of them were now actually throwing off their clothes, in order to prepare to stone Paul.

***Threw dust into the air***— In sign of contempt, and by way of execration. Shimei acted so, in order to express his contempt of David, 2 Samuel 16:13, where it is said, he cursed him as he went, and threw stones at him; or, as the margin, he dusted him with dust. Their throwing dust in the air was also expressive of extraordinary rage and vindictive malice. The apostle, being guarded by the Roman soldiers, was out of the power of the mob; and their throwing dust in the air not only showed their rage, but also their vexation that they could not get the apostle into their power. It is still used as a token of hostility and defiance. M. Denon, (Travels in Egypt, vol. iii. p. 98,) on coming down the Nile to Cairo, stopped at the ancient city of Antinoe, to examine its ruins. “Being desirous of obtaining a view of the whole of these ruins, we ascended a little hill, and soon perceived the inhabitants of the modern village assembling behind an opposite eminence: scarcely had we come over against them than, supposing our intentions to be hostile, they called out for assistance, and threw dust into the air, in token of defiance. The alarm spread, and they began firing upon us.”

**Verse 24. *Examined by scourging***— As the chief captain did not understand the Hebrew language, he was ignorant of the charge brought against Paul, and ignorant also of the defense which the apostle had made;

and, as he saw that they grew more and more outrageous, he supposed that Paul must have given them the highest provocation; and therefore he determined to put him to the torture, in order to find out the nature of his crime. The practice of putting people to the rack, in order to make them confess, has, to the disgrace of human nature, existed in all countries.

**Verse 25.** *And as they bound him*, etc.— They were going to tie him to a post, that they might scourge him.

*Is it lawful*, etc.— The Roman law absolutely forbade the binding of a Roman citizen. See the note on Acts 16:37.

**Verse 28.** *With a great sum obtained I this freedom*— So it appears that the freedom, even of Rome, might be purchased, and that it was sold at a very high price.

*But I was free born*.— It has been generally believed that the inhabitants of Tarsus, born in that city, had the same rights and privileges as Roman citizens, in consequence of a charter or grant from Julius Caesar. Calmet disputes this, because Tarsus was a free not a colonial city; and he supposes that Paul's father might have been rewarded with the freedom of Rome for some military services, and that it was in consequence of this that Paul was horn free. But that the city of Tarsus had such privileges appears extremely probable. In Acts 21:39, Paul says he was born at Tarsus in Cilicia, and in Acts 22:28, he says he was free born; and, at Acts 22:26, he calls himself a Roman; as he does also Acts 16:37. From whence it has been concluded, with every show of reason, that Tarsus, though no Roman colony, yet had this privilege granted to it, that its natives should be citizens of Rome. PLINY, in Hist. Nat. lib. v. 27, tells us that Tarsus was a free city. And APPIAN, Deuteronomy Bello Civil. lib. v. p. 1077, edit. Tollii, says that Antony, *ταρσεας ελευθερους ηφιει, και ατελεις φορων*, made the people of Tarsus free, and discharged them from paying tribute. DIO CASSIUS, lib. xlvii. p. 508, edit. Reimar, farther tells us, Adeo Caesari priori, et ejus gratia etiam posteriori, favebant Tarsenses, ut urbem suam pro Tarso JULIOPOLIN vocaverint: "that, for the affection which the people of Tarsus bore to Julius Caesar, and afterwards to Augustus, the former caused their city to be called Juliopolis." The Greek text is as follows:- *ουτω προσφιλωσ τω καισαρι προτερω, και δι' εκεινον τω δευτερω, οι ταρσεισ ειχον, ωστε και ιουλιιοπολιν*

σφας ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μετονομασαι. To which I add, that PHILO, de Virt. vol. ii. p. 587, edit. Mang., makes Agrippa say to Caligula, **φιλῶν ἐνίων πατριδᾶς ὅλας τῆς ῥωμαικῆς ἡξίωσας πολιτείας** You have made whole countries, to which your friends belong, to be citizens of Rome. See the note on Acts 21:39. These testimonies are of weight sufficient to show that Paul, by being born at Tarsus, might have been free born, and a Roman. See Bishop Pearce on Acts 16:37.

**Verse 29. *After he knew that he was a Roman***— He who was going to scourge him durst not proceed to the torture when Paul declared himself to be a Roman. A passage from Cicero, Orat. pro Verr. Act. ii. lib. v. 64, throws the fullest light on this place: Ille, quisquis erat, quem tu in crucem rapiebas, qui tibi esset ignotus, cum civem se Romanum esse diceret, apud te Praetorem, si non effugium, ne moram quidem mortis mentione atque usurpatione civitatis assequi potuit? “Whosoever he might be whom thou wert hurrying to the rack, were he even unknown to thee, if he said that he was a Roman citizen, he would necessarily obtain from thee, the Praetor, by the simple mention of Rome, if not an escape, yet at least a delay of his punishment.” The whole of the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sections of this oration, which speak so pointedly on this subject, are worthy of consideration. Of this privilege he farther says, Ib. in cap. lvii., Illa vox et exclamatio, Civis Romanus sum, quae saepe multis in ultimis terris opem inter barbaros et salutem tulit, etc. That exclamation, I am a Roman citizen, which often times has brought assistance and safety, even among barbarians, in the remotest parts of the earth, etc.

PLUTARCH likewise, in his Life of Pompey, (vol. iii. p. 445, edit. Bryan,) says, concerning the behavior of the pirates, when they had taken any Roman prisoner, **ἐκεῖνο δὲ ἦν ὑβριστικώτατον κ. τ. λ.** what was the most contumelious was this; when any of those whom they had made captives cried out, **ῥωμαῖος εἶναι**, THAT HE WAS A ROMAN, and told them his name, they pretended to be surprised, and be in a fright, and smote upon their thighs, and fell down (on their knees) to him, beseeching him to pardon them! It is no wonder then that the torturer desisted, when Paul cried out that he was a Roman; and that the chief captain was alarmed, because he had bound him.



**Verse 30. *He-commanded-all their council to appear***— Instead of *ἐλθεῖν*, to come, which we translate, to appear, *συνελθεῖν*, to assemble, or meet together, is the reading of ACE, nearly twenty others, the AEthiopic, Arabic, Vulgate, Chrysostom, and Theophylact: this reading Griesbach has received into the text; and it is most probably the true one: as the chief captain wished to know the certainty of the matter, he desired the Jewish council, or Sanhedrin, to assemble, and examine the business thoroughly, that he might know of what the apostle was accused; as the law would not permit him to proceed against a Roman in any judicial way, but on the clearest evidence; and, as he understood that the cause of their enmity was something that concerned their religion, he considered the Sanhedrin to be the most proper judge, and therefore commanded them to assemble; and there is no doubt that he himself, and a sufficient number of soldiers, took care to attend, as the person of Paul could not be safe in the hands of persons so prejudiced, unprincipled, and enraged.

This chapter should end with the twenty-ninth verse, and the following should begin with the thirtieth; this is the most natural division, and is followed by some of the most correct editions of the original text.

1. IN his address to the council, Paul asserts that he is a Jew, born of and among Jews; and that he had a regular Jewish education; and he takes care to observe that he had early imbibed all the prejudices peculiar to his countrymen, and had given the fullest proof of this in his persecution of the Christians. Thus, his assertions, concerning the unprofitableness of the legal ceremonies, could neither be attributed to ignorance nor indifference. Had a Gentile, no matter how learned or eminent, taught thus, his whole teaching would have been attributed to ignorance, prejudice, and envy. God, therefore, in his endless mercy, made use of a most eminent, learned, and bigoted Jew, to demonstrate the nullity of the whole Jewish system, and show the necessity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. At the close of this chapter, Dr. Dodd has the following judicious remark:—"As unrighteous as it was in the Roman officer, on this popular clamor, to attempt putting this holy apostle to the torture, so reasonable was St. Paul's plea, as a Roman citizen, to decline that suffering. It is a prudence worthy the imitation of the bravest of men, not to throw themselves into unnecessary difficulties. True courage widely differs from

rash and heedless temerity; nor are we under any obligation, as Christians, to give up our civil privileges, which ought to be esteemed as the gifts of God, to every insolent and turbulent invader. In a thousand circumstances, gratitude to God, and duty to men, will oblige us to insist upon them; and a generous concern for those who may come after us should engage us to labor to transmit them to posterity improved rather than impaired.” This should be an article in the creed of every genuine Briton.

## CHAPTER 23.

*Paul defending himself before the high priest, he commands him to be smitten on the mouth, 1, 2. Paul sharply reproves him, and, being reprov'd for this by one of the attendants, accounts for his conduct, 3-5. Seeing that the assembly was composed of Pharisees and Sadducees, and that he could expect no justice from his judges, he asserts that it was for his belief in the resurrection that he was called in question, on which the Pharisees declare in his favor, 6-9. A great dissension arises, and the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be pulled to pieces, brings him into the castle, 10. He is comforted by a dream, 11. More than forty persons conspire his death, 12-15. Paul's sister's son, hearing of it, informs the captain of the guard, 16-22. He sends Paul by night, under a strong escort of horse and foot, to Caesarea, to Felix, and with him a letter, stating the circumstances of the case, 23-33. They arrive at Caesarea, and Felix promises him a hearing when his accusers shall come down, 34, 35.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 23.

**Verse 1.** *I have lived in all good conscience*— Some people seem to have been unnecessarily stumbled with this expression. What does the apostle mean by it? Why, that, while he was a Jew, he was one from principle of conscience; that what he did, while he continued Jew, he did from the same principle; that, when God opened his eyes to see the nature of Christianity, he became a Christian, because God persuaded his conscience that it was right for him to become one; that, in a word, he was sincere through the whole course of his religious life, and his conduct had borne the most unequivocal proofs of it. The apostle means, therefore, that there was no part of his life in which he acted as a dishonest or hypocritical man; and that he was now as fully determined to maintain his profession of Christianity as he ever was to maintain that of Judaism, previously to his acquaintance with the Christian religion.

**Verse 2.** *The high priest, Ananias*— There was a high priest of this name, who was sent a prisoner to Rome by Quadratus, governor of Syria, to give

an account of the part he took in the quarrel between the Jews and the Samaritans; see Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 6, s. 8; but whether he ever returned again to Jerusalem, says Dr. Lightfoot, is uncertain; still more uncertain whether he was ever restored to the office of high priest; and most uncertain of all whether he filled the chair when Paul pleaded his cause, which was some years after Felix was settled in the government. But Krebs has proved that this very Ananias, on being examined at Rome, was found innocent, returned to Jerusalem, and was restored to the high priesthood; see Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 9, s. 2; but of his death I find nothing certain. See Krebs on this place, (Observat. in Nov. Testament. e Flavio Josepho,) who successfully controverts the opinion of Dr. Lightfoot, mentioned at the beginning of this note. There was one Ananias, who is said to have perished in a tumult raised by his own son about five years after this time; see Jos. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 9. War, lib. ii. cap. 17.

**To smite him on the mouth.**— Because he professed to have a good conscience, while believing on Jesus Christ, and propagating his doctrine.

**Verse 3. *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall***— Thou hypocrite! who sittest on the seat of judgment, pretending to hear and seriously weigh the defense of an accused person, who must in justice and equity be presumed to be innocent till he is proved to be guilty; and, instead of acting according to the law, commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law, which always has the person of the prisoner under its protection; nor ever suffers any penalty to be inflicted but what is prescribed as the just punishment for the offense. As if he had said: “Thinkest thou that God will suffer such an insult on his laws, on justice, and on humanity, to pass unpunished?”

**Verse 5. *I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest***— After all the learned labor that has been spent on this subject, the simple meaning appears plainly to be this: —

St. Paul did not know that Ananias was high priest; he had been long absent from Jerusalem; political changes were frequent; the high priesthood was no longer in succession, and was frequently bought and sold; the Romans put down one high priest, and raised up another, as political reasons dictated. As the person of Ananias might have been wholly unknown to him, as the hearing was very sudden, and there was scarcely any time to consult the formalities of justice, it seems very probable that

St. Paul, if he ever had known the person of Ananias, had forgotten him; and as, in a council or meeting of this kind, the presence of the high priest was not indispensably necessary, he did not know that the person who presided was not the sagan, or high priest's deputy, or some other person put in the seat for the time being. I therefore understand the words above in their most obvious and literal sense. He knew not who the person was, and God's Spirit suddenly led him to denounce the Divine displeasure against him.

*Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*— If I had known he was the high priest, I should not have publicly pronounced this execration; for respect is due to his person for the sake of his office. I do not see that Paul intimates that he had done any thing through inadvertence; nor does he here confess any fault; he states two facts:—1. That he did not know him to be the high priest. 2. That such a one, or any ruler of the people, should be revered. But he neither recalled or made an apology for his words: he had not committed a trespass, and he did not acknowledge one. We must beware how we attribute either to him in the case before us.

**Verse 6.** *I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee*— Instead of φαρισαίου, of a Pharisee, ABC, some others, with the Syriac and Vulgate, have φαρισαίων, of the Pharisees; which, if acknowledged to be the genuine reading, would alter the sense thus, I am a Pharisee, and a disciple of the Pharisees, for so the word son is frequently understood.

*Of the hope and resurrection*— Concerning the hope of the resurrection, the καί, and, being here redundant; indeed, it is omitted by the Syriac, all the Arabic, and AÆthiopic. St. Paul had preached the resurrection of the dead, on the foundation and evidence of the resurrection of Christ. For this, he and the apostles were, some time before, imprisoned by the high priest and elders, Acts 4:1-3; 5:17, because they preached, THROUGH JESUS, the resurrection of the dead. This they could not bear; for, if Jesus Christ rose from the dead, their malice and wickedness, in putting him to death, were incontrovertibly established.

**Verse 7.** *And the multitude was divided*— St. Paul, perceiving the assembly to consist of Sadducees and Pharisees, and finding he was not to expect any justice, thought it best thus to divide the council, by introducing a question on which the Pharisees and Sadducees were at issue.

He did so; and the Pharisees immediately espoused his side of the question, because in opposition to the Sadducees, whom they abhorred, as irreligious men.

**Verse 8. *The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection***— It is strange, since these denied a future state, that they observed the ordinances of the law; for they also believed the five books of Moses to be a revelation from God: yet they had nothing in view but temporal good; and they understood the promises in the law as referring to these things alone. In order, therefore, to procure them, they watched, fasted, prayed, etc., and all this they did that they might obtain happiness in the present life. See the account of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Matthew 3:7; 16:1.

**Verse 9. *The scribes-arose, and strove***— *διεμαχοντο*, They contended forcibly—they came to an open rupture with the Sadducees; and, in order to support their own party against them, they even admitted as truth, St. Paul's account of his miraculous conversion, and therefore they said, if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, etc. He had previously mentioned that Jesus Christ had appeared to him, when on his way to Damascus; and, though they might not be ready to admit the doctrine of Christ's resurrection, yet they could, consistently with their own principles, allow that the soul of Christ might appear to him; and they immediately caught at this, as furnishing a strong proof against the doctrine of the Sadducees, who neither believed in angel nor spirit, while the Pharisees confessed both.

***Let us not fight against God.***— These words are wanting in ABCE, several others, with the Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, later Syriac, Vulgate, and some of the fathers.

**Verse 10. *The chief captain-commanded the soldiers to go down***— It appears that the chief captain was present during these transactions, and that he had a body of soldiers in readiness in the castle of Antonia; and it was from this that he commanded them to come down; for the rescue and preservation of Paul.

**Verse 11. *Be of good cheer, Paul***— It is no wonder if, with all these trials and difficulties, St. Paul was much dejected in mind; and especially as he had not any direct intimation from God what the end of the present trials

would be: to comfort him and strengthen his faith, God gave him this vision.

***So must thou bear witness also at Rome.***— This was pleasing intelligence to Paul, who had long desired to see that city, and preach the Gospel of Christ there. He appears to have had an intimation that he should see it; but how, he could not tell; and this vision satisfied him that he should be sent thither by God himself. This would settle every fear and scruple concerning the issue of the present persecution.

**Verse 12. *That they would neither eat nor drink*,** etc.— These forty Jews were no doubt of the class of the sicarii mentioned before, (similar to those afterwards called assassins,) a class of fierce zealots, who took justice into their own hand; and who thought they had a right to despatch all those who, according to their views, were not orthodox in their religious principles. If these were, in their bad way, conscientious men, must they not all perish through hunger, as God put it out of their power to accomplish their vow? No: for the doctrine of sacerdotal absolution was held among the Jews as among the Papists: hence it is said, in Hieros. Avodah Zarah, fol. 40: “He that hath made a vow not to eat any thing, wo to him, if he eat; and wo to him, if he do not eat. If he eat, he sinneth against his vow; and if he do not eat, he sinneth against his life.” What must such a man do in this case? Let him go to the wise men, and they will loose him from his vow, as it is written, Proverbs 12:18: “The tongue of the wise is health.” When vows were so easily dispensed with, they might be readily multiplied. See Lightfoot.

**Verse 15. *And we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.***— We shall lie in wait, and despatch him before he can reach the chief captain. The plan was well and deeply laid; and nothing but an especial providence could have saved Paul.

**Verse 16. *Paul’s sister’s son***— This is all we know of Paul’s family. And we know not how this young man got to Jerusalem; the family, no doubt, still resided at Tarsus.

**Verse 17. *Bring this young man unto the chief captain***— Though St. Paul had the most positive assurance from Divine authority that he should be preserved, yet he knew that the Divine providence acts by reasonable

and prudent means; and that, if he neglected to use the means in his power, he could not expect God's providence to work in his behalf. He who will not help himself, according to the means and power he possesses, has neither reason nor revelation to assure him that he shall receive any assistance from God.

**Verse 23. *Two hundred soldiers***— στρατιωτας, Infantry or foot soldiers.

***Horsemen threescore and ten***— There was always a certain number of horse, or cavalry, attached to the foot.

***Spearmen***— δεξιολαβους, Persons who held a spear or javelin in their hand; from εν τη δεξια λαβειν taking or holding a thing in the right hand. But the Codex Alexandrinus reads δεξιοβολους, from δεξια, the right hand, and βαλλειν, to cast or dart, persons who threw javelins. But both words seem to mean nearly the same thing.

***The third hour of the night***— About nine o'clock P.M., for the greater secrecy, and to elude the cunning, active malice of the Jews.

**Verse 24. *Provide them beasts***— One for Paul, and some others for his immediate keepers.

***Felix the governor.***— This Felix was a freed man of the Emperor Claudius, and brother of Pallas, chief favourite of the emperor. Tacitus calls him Antonius Felix; and gives us to understand that he governed with all the authority of a king, and the baseness and insolence of a quondam slave. E libertis Antonius Felix per omnem saevitiam ac libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit. Hist. v. 9. He had, according to Suetonius, in his life of Claudius, chap. 28, three queens to his wives; that is, he was married thrice, and each time to the daughter or niece of a king. Drusilla, the sister of Agrippa, was his wife at this time; see Acts 24:24. He was an unrighteous governor; a base, mercenary, and bad man: see Acts 24:2.

**Verse 25. *He wrote a letter after this manner***— It appears that this was not only the substance of the letter, but the letter itself: the whole of it is so perfectly formal as to prove this; and in this simple manner are all the letters of the ancients formed. In this also we have an additional proof of St. Luke's accuracy.



**Verse 30. *I sent straightway to thee***— As the proper person before whom this business should ultimately come, and by whom it should be decided.

***Farewell.***— **επωσο**, Be in good health.

**Verse 31. *Antipatris.***— This place, according to Josephus, Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 23, was anciently called Capharsaba, and is supposed to be the same which, in 1 Macc. vii. 31, is called Capharsalama, or Carphasalama. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and denominated Antipatris, in honor of his father Antipater. It was situated between Joppa and Caesarea, on the road from Jerusalem to this latter city. Josephus says it was fifty stadia from Joppa. The distance between Jerusalem and Caesarea was about seventy miles.

**Verse 32. *On the morrow they left the horsemen***— Being now so far from Jerusalem, they considered Paul in a state of safety from the Jews, and that the seventy horse would be a sufficient guard; the four hundred foot, therefore, returned to Jerusalem, and the horse went on to Caesarea with Paul. We need not suppose that all this troop did reach Antipatris on the same night in which they left Jerusalem; therefore, instead of, they brought him by night to Antipatris, we may understand the text thus—Then the soldiers took Paul by night, and brought him to Antipatris. And the thirty-second verse need not to be understood as if the foot reached the castle of Antonia the next day, (though all this was possible,) but that, having reached Antipatris, and refreshed themselves, they set out the same day, on their march to Jerusalem; on the morrow they returned, that is, they began their march back again to the castle. See on Acts 24:1.

**Verse 33. *Who***— That is, the seventy horsemen mentioned above.

**Verse 35. *I will hear thee***— **διακουσομαι σου**; I will give thee a fair, full, and attentive hearing when thy accusers are come; in whose presence thou shalt be permitted to defend thyself.

***In Herod's judgment-hall.***— **εν τω πραιτωριω**, In Herod's praetorium, so called because it was built by Herod the Great. The praetorium was the place where the Roman praetor had his residence; and it is probable that, in or near this place, there was a sort of guard room, where state prisoners were kept. Paul was lodged here till his accusers should arrive.

ON the preceding chapter many useful observations may be made.

1. Paul, while acting contrary to the Gospel of Christ, pleaded conscience as his guide. Conscience is generally allowed to be the rule of human actions; but it cannot be a right rule, unless it be well informed. While it is unenlightened it may be a guide to the perdition of its professor, and the cause of the ruin of others. That conscience can alone be trusted in which the light of God's Spirit and God's truth dwells. An ill-informed conscience may burn even the saints for God's sake!

2. No circumstance in which a man can be placed can excuse him from showing respect and reverence to the authorities which God, in the course of his providence, has instituted for the benefit of civil or religious society. All such authorities come originally from God, and can never lose any of their rights on account of the persons who are invested with them. An evil can never be of use, and a good may be abused; but it loses not its character, essential qualities, or usefulness, because of this abuse.

3. Paul availed himself of the discordant sentiments of his judges, who had agreed to show him no justice, that he might rid himself out of their hands. To take advantage of the sentiments and dispositions of an audience, without deceiving it, and to raise dissension between the enemies of the truth, is an impotent artifice, when truth itself is not violated and when error is exposed thereby to public view.

4. The Pharisees and Sadducees strove together. God frequently raises up defenders of the principles of truth, even among those who, in practice, are its decided enemies. "Though," says one, "I do not like the truth, yet will I defend it." A man clothed with sovereign authority, vicious in his heart, and immoral in his life, fostered those principles of truth and righteousness by which error was banished from these lands, and pure and undefiled religion established among us for many generations.

5. The providence of God, and his management of the world, are in many respects great mysteries; but, as far as we are individually concerned, all is plain. Paul had the fullest assurance, from the mouth of Christ himself, that he should see Rome; and, consequently, that he should be extricated from all his present difficulties. Why then did he not quietly sit still, when his nephew informed him that forty men had conspired to murder him?

Because he knew that God made use of the prudence with which he has endowed man as an agent in that very providence by which he is supported; and that to neglect the natural means of safety with which God provides us is to tempt and dishonor him, and induce him in judgment to use those means against us, which, in his mercy, he had designed for our comfort and salvation. Prudence is well associated even with an apostolical spirit. Every being that God has formed, he designs should accomplish those functions for which he has endowed it with the requisite powers.

6. Claudius Lysias sent Paul to Felix. “In the generality of human events,” says one, “we do not often distinguish the designs of God from those of men. The design of Lysias, in preserving Paul from the rage of the Jews, was to render his own conduct free from exception: the design of God was, that he might bring Paul safely to Rome, that he might attack idolatry in its strongest fort, and there establish the Christian faith.” God governs the world, and works by proper means; and counterworks evil or sinister devices, so as ultimately to accomplish the purposes of his will, and cause all things to work together for good to them that love Him.

7. Felix acted prudently when he would not even hear St. Paul till he had his accusers face to face. How many false judgments, evil surmises, and uncharitable censures would be avoided, did men always adopt this reasonable plan! Hear either side of a complaint separately, and the evil seems very great: hear both together, and the evil is generally lessened by one half. *Audi et alteram partem*-hear the other side, says a heathen: remember, if you have an ear for the first complainant, you have one also for the second.

## CHAPTER 24.

*After five days, Ananias the high priest, the elders, and one Tertullus, an orator, come to Caesarea to accuse Paul, 1. The oration of Tertullus, 2-9. Paul's defense, 10-21. Felix, having heard his defense, proposes to leave the final determination of it till Claudius Lysias should come down; and, in the mean time, orders Paul to be treated with humanity and respect, 22, 23. Felix, and Drusilla his wife, hear Paul concerning the faith of Christ; and Felix is greatly affected, 24, 25. On the expectation of obtaining money for his liberation, Felix keeps Paul in prison, 26, and being superseded in the government of Judea by Porcius Festus, in order to please the Jews, he leaves Paul bound, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 24.

**Verse 1.** *After five days*— These days are to be reckoned from the time in which Paul was apprehended at Jerusalem, and twelve days after he had arrived in that city; see Acts 24:11. Calmet reckons the days thus:—St. Luke says that Paul was apprehended at Jerusalem when the seven days of his vow were nearly ended, Acts 21:27; that is, at the end of the fifth day after his arrival. The next day, which was the sixth, he was presented before the Sanhedrin. The night following, he was taken to Antipatris. The next day, the seventh, he arrived at Caesarea. Five days afterwards, that is, the twelfth day after his arrival at Jerusalem, the high priest and the elders, with Tertullus, came down to accuse him before Felix.—But see the note on Acts 23:32.

*A certain orator named Tertullus*— This was probably a Roman proselyte to Judaism; yet he speaks every where as a Jew. Roman orators, advocates; etc., were found in different provinces of the Roman empire; and they, in general, spoke both the Greek and Latin languages; and, being well acquainted with the Roman laws and customs, were no doubt very useful. Luitprandus supposed that this Tertullus was the same with him who was colleague with Pliny the younger, in the consulate, in the year of

Rome, 852; who is mentioned by Pliny, Epist. v. 15. Of this there is no satisfactory proof.

**Verse 2. *Tertullus began to accuse him***— There are three parts in this oration of Tertullus:—1. The exordium. 2. The proposition. 3. The conclusion. The exordium contains the praise of Felix and his administration, merely for the purpose of conciliating his esteem, Acts 24:2-4; The proposition is contained in Acts 24:5. The narration and conclusion, in Acts 24:6-8.

***By thee we enjoy great quietness***— As bad a governor as Felix most certainly was, he rendered some services to Judea. The country had long been infested with robbers; and a very formidable banditti of this kind, under one Eliezar, he entirely suppressed. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 6; Bell. lib. ii, cap. 22. He also suppressed the sedition raised by an Egyptian impostor, who had seduced 30,000 men; see on Acts 21:38. He had also quelled a very afflictive disturbance which took place between the Syrians and the Jews of Caesarea. On this ground Tertullus said, By thee we enjoy great quietness; and illustrious deeds are done to this nation by thy prudent administration. This was all true; but, notwithstanding this, he is well known from his own historians, and from Josephus, to have been not only a very bad man, but also a very bad governor. He was mercenary, oppressive, and cruel; and of all these the Jews brought proofs to Nero, before whom they accused him; and, had it not been for the interest and influence of his brother Pallas; he had been certainly ruined.

**Verse 3. *We accept it always, and in all places***— We have at all times a grateful sense of thy beneficent administration, and we talk of it in all places, not only before thy face, but behind thy back.

**Verse 4. *That I be not farther tedious unto thee***— That I may neither trespass on thy time, by dwelling longer on this subject, nor on thy modesty, by thus enumerating thy beneficent deeds.

***Hear us of thy clemency***— Give us this farther proof of thy kindness, by hearkening to our present complaint. The whole of this exordium was artful enough, though it was lame. The orator had certainly a very bad cause, of which he endeavored to make the best. Felix was a bad man and bad governor; and yet he must praise him, to conciliate his esteem. Paul

was a very good man, and nothing amiss could be proved against him; and yet he must endeavor to blacken him as much as possible, in order to please his unprincipled and wicked employers. His oration has been blamed as weak, lame, and imperfect; and yet, perhaps, few, with so bad a cause, could have made better of it.

**Verse 5.** *For we have found this man*, etc.— Here the proposition of the orator commences. He accuses Paul, and his accusation includes four particulars:— 1. He is a pest, **λοιμος**; an exceedingly bad and wicked man. 2. He excites disturbances and seditions against the Jews. 3. He is the chief of the sect of the Nazarenes, who are a very bad people, and should not be tolerated. He has endeavored to pollute and profane the temple, and we took him in the fact.

**A pestilent fellow**— The word **λοιμος**, pestis—the plague or pestilence, is used by both Greek and Roman authors to signify a very bad and profligate man; we have weakened the force of the word by translating the substantive adjectively. Tertullus did not say that Paul was a pestilent fellow, but he said that he was the very pestilence itself. As in that of Martial, xi. 92: —

*Non vitiosus homo es, Zoile, sed vitium.*

*“Thou art not a vicious man, O Zoilus, but thou art vice itself.”*

The words **λοιμος**, and pestis, are thus frequently used.—See Wetstein, Bp. Pearce, and Kypke.

**A mover of sedition**— Instead of **στασιν**, sedition, ABE, several others, with the Coptic, Vulgate, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and OEcumenius, read **στασεις**, commotions, which is probably the true reading.

**Among all the Jews**— Bp. Pearce contends that the words should be understood thus—one that stirreth up tumults AGAINST all the Jews; for, if they be understood otherwise, Tertullus may be considered as accusing his countrymen, as if they, at Paul’s instigation, were forward to make insurrections every where. On the contrary, he wishes to represent them as a persecuted and distressed people, by means of Paul and his Nazarenes.

**A ringleader**— *πρωτοστατην*. This is a military phrase, and signifies the officer who stands on the right of the first rank; the captain of the front rank of the sect of the Nazarenes; *της των ναζωραϊων αιρεσεως*, of the heresy of the Nazarenes. This word is used six times by St. Luke; viz. in this verse, and in Acts 24:14, and in Acts 5:17; 15:5; 26:5; 28:22; but in none of them does it appear necessarily to include that bad sense which we generally assign to the word heresy.—See the note on Acts 5:17, where the subject is largely considered; and see farther on Acts 24:14.

**Verse 6. *Hath gone about to profane the temple***— This was a heavy charge, if it could have been substantiated, because the Jews were permitted by the Romans to put any person to death who profaned their temple. This charge was founded on the gross calumny mentioned, Acts 21:28, 29; for, as they had seen Trophimus, an Ephesian, with Paul in the city, they pretended that he had brought him into the temple.

***Would have judged according to our law***— He pretended that they would have tried the case fairly, had not the chief captain taken him violently out of their hands; whereas, had not Lysias interfered, they would have murdered him on the spot.

**Verse 7. *With great violence***— *μετα πολλης βιας*, I rather think, means with an armed force. Tertullus intimates that Lysias interfered contrary to law, and brought soldiers to support him in his infringement on their constitution. This is what he seems to say and complain of; for the Jews were vexed with Lysias for rescuing the apostle from their hands.

**Verse 8. *Commanding his accusers to come***, etc.— Here Tertullus closes his opening and statement of the case; and now he proceeds to call and examine his witnesses; and they were no doubt examined one by one, though St. Luke sums the whole up in one word—The Jews also assented, saying, that these things were so. Whoever considers the plan of Tertullus's speech, will perceive that it was both judicious and artful. Let us take a view of the whole:—1. He praises Felix to conciliate his favor. 2. He generally states the great blessings of his administration. 3. He states that the Jews, throughout the whole land, felt themselves under the greatest obligations to him, and extolled his prudent and beneficent management of the public affairs every where. 4. That the prisoner before him was a very bad man; a disturber of the public peace; a demagogue of a

dangerous party; and so lost to all sense of religion as to attempt to profane the temple! 5. That, though he should have been punished on the spot, yet, as they were ordered by the chief captain to appear before him, and show the reason why they had seized on Paul at Jerusalem, they were accordingly come; and, having now exhibited their charges, he would, 6. proceed to examine witnesses, who would prove all these things to the satisfaction of the governor. 7. He then called his witnesses, and their testimony confirmed and substantiated the charges. No bad cause was ever more judiciously and cunningly managed.

**Verse 10. *Then Paul-answered***— The apostle's defense consists of two parts:-1. The exordium, which has for its object the praise of his judge, whose qualifications to discern and decide on a question of this nature he fully allows; and expects, from this circumstance, to have a favorable hearing. 2. The tractation, which consists of two parts: I. REFUTATION: 1. of the charge of polluting the temple; 2. of stirring up sedition; 3. of being a leader of any sect who had a different worship from the God of their fathers. II. AFFIRMATION: 1. that he had lived so as to preserve a good conscience towards God, and towards men; 2. that so far from polluting the temple, he had been purified in it, and was found thus worshipping according to the law of God; 3. that what Tertullus and his companions had witnessed was perfectly false; and he defied them to produce a single proof, and appeals to those who had been witnesses of his conduct in Jerusalem, who should have been there could they have proved any thing against him.

***Thou hast been of many years a judge***— Cumanus and Felix were, for a time, joint governors of Judea; but, after the condemnation of Cumanus, the government fell entirely into the hands of Felix; and from Josephus we learn that this was now the sixth or seventh year of his administration, which might be called many years, when the very frequent removals of the governors of the provinces are considered. See Jos. Antiq. lib. xx. 7, and see the margin.

A judge-κρίτην, the same here in signification as the Hebrew שֹׁפֵט shophet, which means a ruler or governor. This was the title of the ancient governors of Israel.



**The more cheerfully**— εὐθυμότερον, With a better heart or courage, because, as thy long residence among us has brought thee to a thorough acquaintance with our customs, I may expect a proper decision in my favor, my cause being perfectly sound.

**Verse 11. There are yet but twelve days**— This is his reply to their charge of sedition; the improbability of which is shown from the short time he had spent in Jerusalem, quite insufficient to organize a sedition of any kind; nor could a single proof be furnished that he had attempted to seduce any man, or unhinge any person from his allegiance by subtle disputations, either in the temple, the synagogues, or the city. So that this charge necessarily fell to the ground, self-confuted, unless they could bring substantial proof against him, which he challenges them to do.

**Verse 14. That after the way which they call heresy**— See the explanation of this word in the note on Acts 5:17, and see before, Acts 24:5, where what is here translated heresy, is there rendered sect. At this time the word had no bad acceptance, in reference to religious opinions. The Pharisees themselves, the most respectable body among the Jews, are called a sect; for Paul, defending himself before Agrippa, says that he lived a Pharisee according to the strictest αἵρεσιν, sect, or heresy of their religion. And Josephus, who was a Pharisee, speaks, τῆς τῶν φαρισαίων αἵρεσεως, of the heresy or sect of the Pharisees. LIFE, chap. xxxviii. Therefore it is evident that the word heresy had no bad meaning among the Jews; it meant simply a religious sect. Why then did they use it by way of degradation to St. Paul? This seems to have been the cause. They had already two accredited sects in the land, the Pharisees and Sadducees: the interests of each of these were pretty well balanced, and each had a part in the government, for the council, or Sanhedrin, was composed both of Sadducees and Pharisees: see Acts 23:6. They were afraid that the Christians, whom they called Nazarenes, should form a new sect, and divide the interests of both the preceding; and what they feared, that they charged them with; and, on this account, the Christians had both the Pharisees and the Sadducees for their enemies. They had charged Jesus Christ with plotting against the state, and endeavoring to raise seditions; and they charged his followers with the same. This they deemed a proper engine to bring a jealous government into action.

***So worship I the God of my fathers***— I bring in no new object of worship; no new religious creed. I believe all things as they profess to believe; and acknowledge the Law and the Prophets as divinely inspired books; and have never, in the smallest measure, detracted from the authority or authenticity of either.

**Verse 15. *And have hope toward God***, etc.— I not only do not hold any thing by which the general creed of this people might be altered, in reference to the present state; but, also, I hold nothing different from their belief in reference to a future state; for, if I maintain the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, it is what themselves allow.

**Verse 16. *And herein do I exercise myself***— And this very tenet is a pledge for my good behavior; for as I believe there will be a resurrection, both of the just and unjust, and that every man shall be judged for the deeds done in the body, so I exercise myself day and night, that I may have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.

***Toward God***— In entertaining no opinion contrary to his truth; and in offering no worship contrary to his dignity, purity, and excellence.

***Toward men***.— In doing nothing to them that I would not, on a change of circumstances, they should do to me; and in withholding nothing by which I might comfort and serve them.

**Verse 17. *Now, after many years***, etc.— And as a full proof that I act according to the dictates of this Divine and beneficent creed, though I have been many years absent from my own country, and my political relation to it is almost necessarily dissolved, yet, far from coming to disturb the peace of society, or to injure any person, I have brought ALMS to my nation, the fruits of my own earning and influence among a foreign people, and OFFERINGS to my God and his temple, proving hereby my attachment to my country, and my reverence for the worship of my country's God.

**Verse 18. *Found me purified in the temple***— And the Jews of Asia, who stirred up the persecution against me in Jerusalem, found me purified in the temple, regularly performing the religious vow into which I had entered; giving no cause for suspicion; for I made no tumult, nor had I any number of people with me, by whom I could have accomplished any seditious purpose.

**Verse 20. *Any evil doing in me while I stood before the council***— The Jews of Asia, the most competent witnesses, though my declared enemies, and they who stirred up the persecution against me, should have been here: why are they kept back? Because they could prove nothing against me. Let these, therefore, who are here, depose, if they have found any evil in me, or proved against me, by my most virulent adversaries, when examined before them in their council at Jerusalem.

**Verse 21. *Except it be for this one voice***— The Sadducees who belong to that council, and who deny the resurrection of the dead, may indeed blame me for professing my faith in this doctrine; but as this is a doctrine credited by the nation in general, and as there can be nothing criminal in such a belief, and there can bring no accusation against me relative to any thing else, this, of course, is the sum of all the charges to which I am called to answer before you this day.

**Verse 22. *And when Felix heard these things***— There is considerable difficulty in this verse. Translators greatly vary concerning the sense; and the MSS. themselves read variously. Mr. Wakefield's translation appears to be as proper as most: Now Felix, upon hearing these things, put them off by saying, When Lysias the captain is come down, after I have gained a more exact knowledge of this doctrine, I will inquire fully into your business.

Calmet's translation is nearly to the same sense: —

Felix, having heard these things, put them off to another time, saying, When I shall have acquired a more accurate knowledge of this sect, and when the tribune Lysias shall have come from Jerusalem, I will judge of your business.

And this mode of interpretation is rendered the more likely from the circumstance, that, previously to the coming down of Lysias, Felix had sent for Paul, concerning the faith of Christ; and this he appears to have done, that he might be the better qualified to judge of the business, when it should come again before him. See on Acts 24:20.

**Verse 23. *He commanded a centurion to keep Paul***— He gave him into the custody of a captain, by whom he was most likely to be well used: and to let him have liberty; he freed him from the chains with which he was

bound to the soldiers, his keepers. See on Acts 21:33. And that he should forbid none of his acquaintance, **των ιδιων**, of his own people, his fellow apostles, and the Christians in general, to minister or come unto him; to furnish him with any of the conveniences and comforts of life, and visit him as often as they pleased. This was an ample proof that Felix found no evil in him; and he would certainly have dismissed him but for two reasons: 1. He wanted to please the Jews, who, he knew, could depose grievous things against his administration. 2. He hoped to get money from the apostle, or his friends, as the purchase of his liberty.

**Verse 24. *His wife Drusilla***— We have already seen that Felix was thrice married: two of his wives were named Drusilla; one was a Roman, the niece or grand-daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, mentioned by Tacitus, lib. v. cap. 9. The other, the person in the text, was a Jewess, daughter to Herod Agrippa the Great. See Acts 12:1, etc. When she was but six years of age, she was affianced to Epiphanes, son of Antiochus, king of Comagene, who had promised to embrace Judaism on her account; but, as he did not keep his word, her brother Agrippa (mentioned Acts 25:13) refused to ratify the marriage. About the year of our Lord 53, he married her to Azizus, king of the Emesenes, who received her on condition of being circumcised. Felix having seen her, fell desperately in love with her, and by means of a pretended Jewish magician, a native of Cyprus, persuaded her to leave her husband; on which Felix took her to wife. She appears, on the whole, to have been a person of indifferent character; though one of the finest women of that age. It is said that she, and a son she had by Felix, were consumed in an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. See Josephus, Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 7, and see Calmet and Rosenmuller.

***Heard him concerning the faith in Christ.***— For the purpose mentioned in the note on Acts 24:21, that he might be the more accurately instructed in the doctrines, views, etc., of the Christians.

**Verse 25. *As he reasoned of righteousness***— **δικαιοσυνης**; The principles and requisitions of justice and right, between God and man; and between man and his fellows, in all relations and connections of life.

***Temperance***— **εγκρατειας**, Chastity; self-government or moderation with regard to a man's appetites, passions, and propensities of all kinds.

**And judgment to come**— κριματος του μελλοντος; The day of retribution, in which the unjust, intemperate, and incontinent, must give account of all the deeds done in the body. This discourse of St. Paul was most solemnly and pointedly adapted to the state of the person to whom it was addressed. Felix was tyrannous and oppressive in his government; lived under the power of avarice and unbridled appetites; and his incontinence, intemperance, and injustice, appear fully in depriving the king of Emesa of his wife, and in his conduct towards St. Paul, and the motives by which that conduct was regulated. And as to Drusilla, who had forsaken the husband of her youth, and forgotten the covenant of her God, and become the willing companion of this bad man, she was worthy of the strongest reprehension; and Paul's reasoning on righteousness, temperance, and judgment, was not less applicable to her than to her unprincipled paramour.

**Felix trembled**— “The reason of Felix's fear,” says Bp. Pearce, “seems to have been, lest Drusilla, who was a Jewess, and knew that what she had done was against the law of Moses, might be influenced by Paul's discourse, and Felix's happiness with her disturbed. What is said of Felix, Acts 24:26, seems to show that he had no remorse of conscience for what he had done.” On the head of Drusilla's scruples, he had little to fear; the king of Emesa, her husband, had been dead about three years before this; and as to Jewish scruples, she could be little affected by them: she had already acted in opposition to the Jewish law, and she is said to have turned heathen for the sake of Felix. We may therefore hope that Felix felt regret for the iniquities of his life; and that his conscience was neither so scared nor so hardened, as not to receive and retain some gracious impressions from such a discourse, delivered by the authority, and accompanied with the influence, of the Spirit of God. His frequently sending for the apostle, to speak with him in private, is a proof that he wished to receive farther instructions in a matter in which he was so deeply interested; though he certainly was not without motives of a baser kind; for he hoped to get money for the liberation of the apostle.

**Go thy way for this time**— His conscience had received as much terror and alarm as it was capable of bearing; and probably he wished to hide, by privacy, the confusion and dismay which, by this time, were fully evident in his countenance.

**Verse 26. *He hoped also that money should have been given him***— Bp. Pearce asks, “How could St. Luke know this?” To which I answer: From the report of St. Paul, with whom Felix had frequent conferences, and to whom he undoubtedly expressed this wish. We may see, here, the most unprincipled avarice, in Felix, united to injustice. Paul had proved before him his innocence of the charges brought against him by the Jews. They had retired in confusion when he had finished his defense. Had Felix been influenced by the common principles of justice, Paul had been immediately discharged; but he detained him on the hope of a ransom. He saw that Paul was a respectable character; that he had opulent friends; that he was at the head of a very numerous sect, to whom he was deservedly dear; and he took it, therefore, for granted that a considerable sum of money would be given for his enlargement. Felix was a freed man of the Emperor Claudius; consequently, had once been a slave. The stream rises not above its source: the meanness of the slave is still apparent, and it is now insufferable, being added to the authority and influence of the governor. Low-bred men should never be intrusted with the administration of public affairs.

**Verse 27. *After two years***— That is, from the time that Paul came prisoner to Caesarea.

***Porcius Festus***— This man was put into the government of Judea about A.D. 60, the sixth or seventh year of Nero. In the succeeding chapter we shall see the part that he took in the affairs of St. Paul.

***Willing to show the Jews a pleasure***— As he had not got the money which he expected, he hoped to be able to prevent the complaints of the Jews against his government, by leaving Paul, in some measure, in their hands. For it was customary for governors, etc., when they left, or were removed from a particular district or province, to do some public, beneficent act, in order to make themselves popular. But Felix gained nothing by this: the Jews pursued him with their complaints against his administration, even to the throne of the emperor. Josephus states the matter thus: “Now when Porcius Festus was sent as successor to Felix, by Nero, the principal of the Jewish inhabitants of Caesarea went up to Rome, to accuse Felix. And he certainly would have been brought to punishment, had not Nero yielded to the importunate solicitations of his brother Pallas, who was at that time in the highest reputation with the

emperor.”-Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 9. Thus, like the dog in the fable, by snatching at the shadow, he lost the substance. He hoped for money from the apostle, and got none; he sought to conciliate the friendship of the Jews, and miscarried. Honesty is the best policy: he that fears God need fear nothing else. Justice and truth never deceive their possessor.

1. Envy and malice are indefatigable, and torment themselves in order to torment and ruin others. That a high priest, says pious Quesnel, should ever be induced to leave the holy city, and the functions of religion, to become the accuser of an innocent person; this could be no other than the effect of a terrible dereliction, and the punishment of the abuse of sacred things.

2. Tertullus begins his speech with flattery, against which every judge should have a shut ear; and then he proceeds to calumny and detraction. These generally succeed each other. He who flatters you, will in course calumniate you for receiving his flattery. When a man is conscious of the uprightness of his cause, he must know that to attempt to support it by any thing but truth tends directly to debase it.

3. The resurrection of the body was the grand object of the genuine Christian’s hope; but the ancient Christians only hoped for a blessed resurrection on the ground of reconciliation to God through the death of his Son. In vain is our hope of glory, if we have not got a meetness for it. And who is fit for this state of blessedness, but he whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and whose heart is purified from deceit and guile!

4. We could applaud the lenity shown to St. Paul by Felix, did not his own conduct render his motives for this lenity very suspicious. “To think no evil, where no evil seems,” is the duty of a Christian; but to refuse to see it, where it most evidently appears, is an imposition on the understanding itself.

5. Justice, temperance, and a future judgment, the subjects of St. Paul’s discourse to Felix and Drusilla, do not concern an iniquitous judge alone; they are subjects which should affect and interest every Christian; subjects which the eye should carefully examine, and which the heart should ever feel. Justice respects our conduct in life, particularly in reference to others: temperance, the state and government of our souls, in reference to God. He

who does not exercise himself in these has neither the form nor the power of godliness; and consequently must be overwhelmed with the shower of Divine wrath in the day of God's appearing, Many of those called Christians, have not less reason to tremble at a display of these truths than this heathen.



## CHAPTER 25.

*Porcius Festus being appointed governor of Judea, instead of Felix, the Jews beseech him to have Paul brought up to Jerusalem, that he might be tried there; they lying in wait to kill him on the way, 1-3. Festus refuses, and desires those who could prove any thing against him, to go with him to Caesarea, 4, 5. Festus, having tarried at Jerusalem about ten days, returns to Caesarea, and the next day Paul is brought to his trial, and the Jews of Jerusalem bring many groundless charges against him, against which he defends himself, 6-8. In order to please the Jews, Festus asks Paul if he be willing to go up to Jerusalem, and be tried there, 9. Paul refuses, and appeals to Caesar, and Festus admits the appeal, 10-13. King Agrippa, and Bernice his wife, come to Cesarea to visit Festus, and are informed by him of the accusations against Paul, his late trial, and his appeal from them to Caesar, 14-21. Agrippa desires to hear Paul; and a hearing is appointed for the following day, 22. Agrippa, Bernice, the principal officers and chief men of the city being assembled, Paul is brought forth, 23. Festus opens the business with generally stating the accusations against Paul, his trial on these accusations, the groundless and frivolous nature of the charges, his own conviction of his innocence, and his desire that the matter might be heard by the king himself, that he might have something specifically to write to the emperor, to whom he was about to send Paul, agreeably to his appeal, 24-27.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 25.

**Verse 1.** *Now when Festus was come into the province*— By the province is meant Judea; for, after the death of Herod Agrippa, Claudius thought it imprudent to trust the government in the hands of his son Agrippa, who was then but seventeen years of age; therefore Cuspius Fadus was sent to be procurator. And when afterwards Claudius had given to Agrippa the tetrarchate of Philip, that of Batanea and Abila, he nevertheless kept the province of Judea more immediately in his own hands, and governed it by procurators sent from Rome. Joseph. Ant. lib. xx. cap. 7, sec. 1. Felix being removed, Porcius Festus is sent in his place; and having come to Caesarea,

where the Roman governor generally had his residence, after he had tarried three days, he went up to Jerusalem, to acquaint himself with the nature and complexion of the ecclesiastical government of the Jews; no doubt, for the purpose of the better administration of justice among them.

**Verse 2. *The high priest-informed him against Paul***— They supposed that as Felix, to please them, on the resignation of his government, had left Paul bound, so Festus, on the assumption of it, would, to please them, deliver him into their hand; but, as they wished this to be done under the color of justice, they exhibited a number of charges against Paul, which they hoped would appear to Festus a sufficient reason why a new trial should be granted; and he be sent to Jerusalem to take this trial. Their motive is mentioned in the succeeding verse.

**Verse 4. *Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea***— It is truly astonishing that Festus should refuse this favor to the heads of the Jewish nation, which, to those who were not in the secret, must appear so very reasonable; and especially as, on his coming to the government, it might be considered an act that was likely to make him popular; and he could have no interest in denying their request. But God had told Paul that he should testify of him at Rome; and he disposed the heart of Festus to act as he did; and thus disappointed the malice of the Jews, and fulfilled his own gracious design.

***He-would depart shortly***— So had the providence of God disposed matters that Festus was obliged to return speedily to Caesarea; and thus had not time to preside in such a trial at Jerusalem. And this reason must appear sufficient to the Jews; and especially as he gave them all liberty to come and appear against him, who were able to prove the alleged charges.

**Verse 5. *Let them-which among you are able***— οἱ δυνατοί, Those who have authority; for so is this word often used by good Greek authors, and by Josephus. Festus seems to have said: “I have heard clamours from the multitude relative to this man; but on such clamours no accusation should be founded: yourselves have only the voice of the multitude as the foundation of the request which you now make. I cannot take up accusations which may affect the life of a Roman citizen on such pretenses. Are there any respectable men among you; men in office and authority, whose character is a pledge for the truth of their depositions,

who can prove any thing against him? If so, let these come down to Caesarea, and the cause shall be tried before me; and thus we shall know whether he be a malefactor or not.”

**Verse 6. *When he had tarried more than ten days***— The strangeness of this mode of expression suggests the thought that our printed text is not quite correct in this place; and this suspicion is confirmed by an examination of MSS. and versions: *ημερας ου πλειους οκτω η δεκα*, NOT more than EIGHT OR ten days, is the reading of ABC, several others of great respectability, with the Coptic, Armenian, and Vulgate. Griesbach admits this reading into the text: and of it Professor White says, *Lectio indubie genuina*: “This is doubtless the genuine reading.”

**Verse 7. *The Jews laid many and grievous complaints against Paul***— As they must have perceived that the Roman governors would not intermeddle with questions of their law, etc., they no doubt invented some new charges, such as sedition, treason, etc., in order to render the mind of the governor evil affected towards Paul; but their malicious designs were defeated, for assertion would not go for proof before a Roman tribunal: this court required proof, and the blood-thirsty persecutors of the apostle could produce none.

**Verse 8. *While he answered for himself***— In this instance St. Luke gives only a general account, both of the accusations and of St. Paul’s defense. But, from the words in this verse, the charges appear to have been threefold: 1. That he had broken the law. 2. That he had defiled the temple. 3. That he dealt in treasonable practices: to all of which he no doubt answered particularly; though we have nothing farther here than this, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.

**Verse 9. *Willing to do the Jews a pleasure***— This was merely to please them, and conciliate their esteem; for he knew that, as Paul was a Roman citizen, he could not oblige him to take a new trial at Jerusalem.

**Verse 10. *I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat***— Every procurator represented the person of the emperor in the province over which he presided; and, as the seat of government was at Caesarea, and Paul was now before the tribunal on which the emperor’s representative sat, he

could say, with the strictest propriety, that he stood before Caesar's judgment seat, where, as a freeman of Rome, he should be tried.

*As thou very well knowest.*— The record of this trial before Felix was undoubtedly left for the inspection of Festus; for, as he left the prisoner to his successor, he must also leave the charges against him, and the trial which he had undergone. Besides, Festus must be assured of his innocence, from the trial through which he had just now passed.

**Verse 11.** *For if I be an offender*— If it can be proved that I have broken the laws, so as to expose me to capital punishment, I do not wish to save my life by subterfuges; I am before the only competent tribunal; here my business should be ultimately decided.

*No man may deliver me unto them*— The words of the apostle are very strong and appropriate. The Jews asked as a favor, *χαριν*, from Festus, that he would send Paul to Jerusalem, Acts 25:3. Festus, willing to do the Jews *χαριν*, this favor, asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged, Acts 25:9. Paul says, I have done nothing amiss, either against the Jews or against Caesar; therefore no man *με δυναται αυτοις χαρισασθαι*, can make a PRESENT of me to them; that is, favor them so far as to put my life into their hands, and thus gratify them by my death. Festus, in his address to Agrippa, Acts 25:16, admits this, and uses the same form of speech: It is not the custom of the Romans, *χαριζεσθαι*, gratuitously to give up any one, etc. Much of the beauty of this passage is lost by not attending to the original words. See on Acts 25:16.

*I appeal unto Caesar.*— A freeman of Rome, who had been tried for a crime, and sentence passed on him, had a right to appeal to the emperor, if he conceived the sentence to be unjust; but, even before the sentence was pronounced, he had the privilege of an appeal, in criminal cases, if he conceived that the judge was doing any thing contrary to the laws. ANTE sententiam appellari potest in criminali negotio, si judex contra leges hoc faciat.-GROTIUS.

An appeal to the emperor was highly respected. The Julian law condemned those magistrates, and others having authority, as violaters of the public peace, who had put to death, tortured, scourged, imprisoned, or condemned any Roman citizen who had appealed to Caesar. *Lege Julia de*

vi publica damnatur, qui aliqua potestate praeditus, Civem Romanum ad Imperatorem appellansem necarit, necarive jusserit, torserit, verberauerit, condemnaverit, in publica vincula duci jusserit. Pauli Recept. Sent. lib. v. t. 26.

This law was so very sacred and imperative, that, in the persecution under Trajan, Pliny would not attempt to put to death Roman citizens who were proved to have turned Christians; hence, in his letter to Trajan, lib. x. Ep. 97, he says, *Fuerunt alii similis amentiae, quos, quia cives Romani erant, annotavi in urbem remittendos.* ‘There were others guilty of similar folly, whom, finding them to be Roman citizens, I have determined to send to the city.’ Very likely these had appealed to Caesar.

**Verse 12. *Conferred with the council***— From this circumstance, we may learn that the appeal of Paul to Caesar was conditional; else Festus could not have deliberated with his council whether it should be granted; for he had no power to refuse to admit such an appeal. We may, therefore, understand Paul thus: “I now stand before a tribunal where I ought to be judged; if thou refuse to hear and try this cause, rather than go to Jerusalem, I appeal to Caesar.” Festus, therefore, consulted with the council, whether he should proceed to try the cause, or send Paul to Rome; and it appears that the majority were of opinion that he should be sent to Caesar.

***Hast thou appealed unto Caesar***, etc.— Rather, Thou hast appealed unto Caesar, and to Caesar thou shalt go. The Jews were disappointed of their hope; and Festus got his hand creditably drawn out of a business with which he was likely to have been greatly embarrassed.

**Verse 13. *King Agrippa***— This was the son of Herod Agrippa, who is mentioned Acts 12:1. Upon the death of his father’s youngest brother, Herod, he succeeded him in the kingdom of Chalcis, by the favor of the Emperor Claudius: *Jos. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 4, s. 2; and Bell. lib. ii. cap. 12, s. 1.* Afterwards, Claudius removed him from that kingdom to a larger one, giving him the tetrarchy of Philip, which contained Trachonitis, Batanea, and Gaulonitis. He gave him, likewise, the tetrarchy of Lysanias, and the province which Varus had governed. *Jos. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 6, s. 1; Bell. lib. ii. cap. 19, s. 8.* Nero made a farther addition, and gave him four cities, Abila, Julias in Peraea, Tarichaea and Tiberias in Galilee: *Jos. Antiq. lib. xx.*

cap. 7, s. 4; Bell. lib. ii. cap 13, s. 2. Claudius gave him the power of appointing the high priest among the Jews; Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 1, s. 3; and instances of his exercising this power may be seen in Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 7, s. 8, 11. This king was strongly attached to the Romans, and did every thing in his power to prevent the Jews from rebelling against them; and, when he could not prevail, he united his troops to those of Titus, and assisted in the siege of Jerusalem: he survived the ruin of his country several years. See Bishop Pearce and Calmet.

Bernice, or, as she is sometimes called, Berenice, was sister of this Agrippa, and of the Drusilla mentioned Acts 24:24: She was at first married to her uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, Jos. Antiq. lib. xix. cap. 9, s. 1; and, on his death, went to live with her brother Agrippa, with whom she was violently suspected to lead an incestuous life. Juvenal, as usual, mentions this in the broadest manner-Sat. vi. ver. 155: —

*Deinde adamas notissimus, et Berenices  
In digito factus pretiosior: hunc dedit olim  
Barbarus incestae, dedit hunc Agrippa sorori.*

“Next, a most valuable diamond, rendered more precious by being put on the finger of Berenice; a barbarian gave it to this incestuous woman formerly; and Agrippa gave this to his sister.” Josephus mentions the report of her having criminal conversation with her brother Agrippa, *φημης επισχουσης, οτι τυδελφω συνηει*. To shield herself from this scandal, she persuaded Polemo, king of Cilicia, to embrace the Jewish religion, and marry her; this he was induced to do on account of her great riches; but she soon left him, and he revolted to heathenism: see Jos. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 7, s. 3. After this, she lived often with her brother, and her life was by no means creditable; she had, however, address to ingratiate herself with Titus Vespasian, and there were even rumors of her becoming empress-propterque insignem reginae Berenices amorem, cui etiam nuptias pollicitus ferebatur.-Suet. in Vit. Titi. Which was prevented by the murmurs of the Roman people: Berenicen statim ab urbe dimisit, invitus invitam.-Ibid. Tacitus also, Hist. lib. ii. cap. 1, speaks of her love intrigue with Titus. From all accounts she must have been a woman of great address; and, upon the whole, an exceptionable character.

**Verse 14. *Declared Paul's cause unto the king***— Festus knew that Agrippa was better acquainted with such matters than he was; and he wished, in some sort, to make him a party in this business.

**Verse 15. *Desiring to have judgment against him***.— Instead of *δικην*, judgment, *καταδικην*, condemnation, sentence of death, is the reading of ABC, and several others, which is probably genuine. This is evidently the meaning of the place, whichever reading we prefer. Nothing could satisfy these men but the death of the apostle. It was not justice they wanted, but his destruction.

**Verse 16. *It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die***— *χαριζεσθαι τινα ανθρωπον*, TO MAKE A PRESENT of any man; gratuitously to give up the life of any man, through favor or caprice. Here is a reference to the subject discussed on Acts 25:11.

***Before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face***, etc.— For this righteous procedure the Roman laws were celebrated over the civilized world. APPIAN, in his Hist. Roman., says: *ου πατριον σφισιν ακριτους καταδικαζεσθαι*. It is not their custom to condemn men before they have been heard. And PHILO Deuteronomy Praesid. Rom., says: *τοτε γαρ κοινους εαυτους παρεχοντες δικαστας εξ ισου, και των κατηγορων και απολογουμενων ακουομενοι, μηδενος ακιτου προκαταγινωσκειν αξιουντες, εβραβευον ουτε προς εχθραν, ουτε προς χαριν, αλλα προς την φυσιν της αληθειας, τα δοξαντα ειναι δικαια*. “For then, by giving sentence in common, and hearing impartially both plaintiff and defendant, not thinking it right to condemn any person unheard, they decided as appeared to them to be just; without either enmity or favor, but according to the merits of the case.” See Bp. Pearce. England can boast such laws, not only in her statute books, but in constant operation in all her courts of justice. Even the king himself, were he so inclined, could not imprison nor punish a man without the regular procedure of the law; and twelve honest men, before whom the evidence has been adduced, the case argued, and the law laid down and explained, are ultimately to judge whether the man be guilty or not guilty. Here, in this favored country, are no arbitrary imprisonments—no Bastilles—no lettres de cachet. Lex facit Regem: the law makes the king, says Bracton, and the king is the grand executor and guardian of the laws—laws, in the eyes of which the character, property, and life of every subject are sacred.

**Verse 18. *They brought none accusation of such things as I supposed*—**

It was natural for Festus, at the first view of things, to suppose that Paul must be guilty of some very atrocious crime. When he found that he had been twice snatched from the hands of the Jews; that he had been brought to Caesarea, as a prisoner, two years before; that he had been tried once before the Sanhedrin, and once before the governor of the province; that he had now lain two years in bonds; and that the high priest and all the heads of the Jewish nation had united in accusing him, and whose condemnation they loudly demanded; when, I say, he considered all this, it was natural for him to suppose the apostle to be some flagitious wretch; but when he had tried the case, and heard their accusations and his defense, how surprised was he to find that scarcely any thing that amounted to a crime was laid to his charge; and that nothing that was laid to his charge could be proved!

**Verse 19. *Questions-of their own superstition*—** *περι της ιδιας δειδιδαιμονιας*; Questions concerning their own religion. Superstition meant something as bad among the Romans as it does among us; and is it likely that Festus, only a procurator, should thus speak to Agrippa, a KING, concerning his own religion? He could not have done so without offering the highest insult. The word *δειςιδαιμονια* must therefore simply mean religion-the national creed, and the national worship, as I have at large proved it to mean, in the observations at the end of Acts 17:34.

***And of one Jesus, which was dead***, etc.— In this way does this poor heathen speak of the death and resurrection of Christ! There are many who profess Christianity that do not appear to be much farther enlightened.

**Verse 20. *I doubted of such manner of questions*—** Such as, whether he had broken their law, defiled their temple; or whether this Jesus, who was dead, was again raised to life.

**Verse 21. *Unto the hearing of Augustus*—** *εις την του σεβαστου διαγνωσιν*; To the discrimination of the emperor. For, although *σεβαστος* is usually translated Augustus, and the Roman emperors generally assumed this epithet, which signifies no more than the venerable, the august, yet here it seems to be used merely to express the emperor, without any reference to any of his attributes or titles.



**Verse 22. *I would also hear the man myself***— A spirit of curiosity, similar to that of Herod, Luke 23:8.

As Herod, the father of this Agrippa, had been so active an instrument in endeavoring to destroy Christianity, having killed James, and was about to have put Peter to death also, had not God sent him to his own place, there is no doubt that Agrippa had heard much about Christianity; and as to St. Paul, his conversion was so very remarkable that his name, in connection with Christianity, was known, not only throughout Judea, but through all Asia Minor and Greece. Agrippa, therefore might naturally wish to see and hear a man of whom he had heard so much.

**Verse 23. *With great pomp***— *μετα πολλης φαντασιας*; With much phantasy, great splendor, great parade, superb attendance or splendid retinue: in this sense the Greek word is used by the best writers. Wetstein has very justly remarked, that these children of Herod the Great made this pompous appearance in that very city where, a few years before, their father, for his PRIDE, was smitten of God, and eaten up by worms! How seldom do the living lay any of God's judgments to heart!

***The place of hearing***— A sort of audience chamber, in the palace of Festus. This was not a trial of Paul; there were no Jews present to accuse him, and he could not be tried but at Rome, as he had appealed to Caesar. These grandees wished to hear the man speak of his religion, and in his own defense, through a principle of curiosity.

**Verse 26. *I have no certain thing to write***— Nothing alleged against him has been substantiated.

***Unto my Lord***— The title *κυριος*, Dominus, Lord, both Augustus and Tiberius had absolutely refused; and forbade, even by public edicts, the application of it to themselves. Tiberius himself was accustomed to say that he was lord only of his slaves, emperor or general of the troops, and prince of the senate. See Suetonius, in his life of this prince. The succeeding emperors were not so modest; they affected the title. Nero, the then emperor, would have it; and Pliny the younger is continually giving it to Trajan in his letters.

**Verse 27. *For it seemeth to me unreasonable***, etc.— Every reader must feel the awkward situation in which Festus stood. He was about to send a

prisoner to Rome, to appear before Nero, though he had not one charge to support against him; and yet he must be sent, for he had appealed to Caesar. He hoped therefore that Agrippa, who was of the Jewish religion, would be able to discern more particularly the merits of this case; and might, after hearing Paul, direct him how to draw up those letters, which, on sending the prisoner, must be transmitted to the emperor.

This chapter ends as exceptionably as the twenty-first. It should have begun at Acts 25:13, and have been continued to the end of the twenty-sixth chapter, or both chapters have been united in one.

1. FROM St. Paul's appeal to Caesar, we see that it is lawful to avail ourselves, even in the cause of God, of those civil privileges with which his mercy has blessed us. It is often better to fall into the hands of the heathen than into the hands of those who, from mistaken views of religion, have their hearts filled with bitter persecuting zeal. Those who can murder a man, pretendedly for God's sake, because he does not think exactly with them on ceremonial or speculative points of divinity, have no portion of that religion which came down from God.

2. The Jews endeavored by every means to deny the resurrection of our Lord; and it seems to have been one part of their accusation against Paul, that he asserted that the man, Jesus, whom they had crucified, was risen from the dead. On this subject, a pious writer observes: "What a train of errors and miseries does one single instance of deceit draw after it; and what a judgment upon those, who, by corrupting the guards of the sepulchre, the witnesses of the resurrection of our Lord, have kept the whole nation in infidelity!" Thus it often happens in the world that one bad counsel, one single lie or calumny, once established, is the source of infinite evils.

3. The grand maxim of the Roman law and government, to condemn no man unheard, and to confront the accusers with the accused, should be a sacred maxim with every magistrate and minister, and among all private Christians. How many harsh judgments and uncharitable censures would this prevent! Conscientiously practised in all Christian societies, detraction, calumny, tale-bearing, whispering, backbiting, misunderstandings, with every unbrotherly affection, would necessarily be banished from the Church of God.



## CHAPTER 26.

*Paul answers for himself before Agrippa, to whom he pays a true compliment, in order to secure a favorable hearing, 1-3; gives an account of his education from his youth up, 4, 5; shows that the Jews persecuted him for his maintaining the hope of the resurrection, 6-8; states his persecution of the Christians, 9-11; gives an account of his miraculous conversion, 12-16; and of his call to the ministry, 16-18. His obedience to that call, and his success in preaching the doctrine of Christ crucified, 19-23. While he is thus speaking, Festus interrupts him, and declares him to be mad through his abundant learning, 24; which charge he modestly refutes with inimitable address, and appeals to King Agrippa for the truth and correctness of his speech, 25-27. On which, Agrippa confesses himself almost converted to Christianity, 28. Paul's affectionate and elegant address to him on this declaration, 29. The council breaks up, and they all pronounce him innocent, 30-32.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 26.

**Verse 1.** *Then Paul stretched forth the hand*— This act, as we have already seen on Acts 21:40, was merely to gain attention; it was no rhetorical flourish, nor designed for one. From knowing, partly by descriptions, and partly by ancient statues, how orators and others who address a concourse of people stood, we can easily conceive the attitude of St. Paul. When the right hand was stretched out, the left remained under the cloak, which being thrown off the right shoulder, to give the arm the fuller liberty, it then rested on the left: under these circumstances, the hand could be stretched out gracefully, but was confined to no one attitude, though the third and fourth fingers were generally clenched.

**Verse 2.** *I think myself happy*— As if he had said, This is a peculiarly fortunate circumstance in my favor, that I am called to make my defense before a judge so intelligent, and so well acquainted with the laws and customs of our country. It may be necessary just to observe that this Agrippa was king of Trachonitis, a region which lay on the north of

Palestine, on the east side of Jordan, and south of Damascus. For his possessions, see on Acts 25:13.

**Verse 4. *My manner of life***, etc.— The apostle means to state that, though born in Tarsus, he had a regular Jewish education, having been sent up to Jerusalem for that purpose; but at what age does not appear; probably about twelve, for at this age the male children were probably brought to the annual solemnities. See on Luke 2:41.

**Verse 5. *After the most straitest sect***— That is, the Pharisees; who were reputed the strictest in their doctrines, and in their moral practices, of all the sects then among the Jews. The sects were the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.

**Verse 6. *For the hope of the promise***— This does not appear to mean, the hope of the Messiah, as some have imagined, but the hope of the resurrection of the dead, to which the apostle referred in Acts 23:6, where he says to the Jewish council, (from which the Roman governor took him,) of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question: see the notes there. And here he says, I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise, etc., and to which, he says, Acts 26:7, the twelve tribes hope to come. The Messiah had come, and was gone again, as Paul well knew; and what is here meant is something which the Jews hoped to come to, or attain; not what was to come to them; and this singular observation excludes the Messiah from being meant. It was the resurrection of all men from the dead which Paul's words signified; and this the Jews had been taught to hope for, by many passages in the Old Testament. I shall only add, that when, in the next verse, this hope of the promise is mentioned as what the Jews did then hope, *καταντησαι*, to come to, it is the very same word which Paul, in Philippians 3:11, uses to express the same thing: If by any means, (says he) *καταντησω*, I might attain to, the resurrection of the dead. Bp. Pearce.

**Verse 8. *That God should raise the dead?***— As Agrippa believed in the true God, and knew that one of his attributes was omnipotence, he could not believe that the resurrection of the dead was an impossible thing; and to this belief of his the apostle appeals; and the more especially, because the Sadducees denied the doctrine of the resurrection, though they professed to believe in the same God. Two attributes of God stood

pledged to produce this resurrection: his truth, on which his promise was founded; and his power, by which the thing could be easily affected, as that power is unlimited.

Some of the best critics think this verse should be read thus: What! should it be thought a thing incredible with you, if God should raise the dead?

**Verse 10. *Many of the saints***— From what is said in this verse, it seems that Paul, before his conversion, was invested with much power: he imprisoned the Christians; punished many in various synagogues; compelled them to blaspheme-to renounce, and, perhaps, to execrate Christ, in order to save their lives; and gave his voice, exerted all his influence and authority, against them, in order that they might be put to death; and from this it would seem that there were other persons put to death besides St. Stephen, though their names are not mentioned.

**Verse 11. *Being exceedingly mad against them***— Only a madman will persecute another because of his differing from him in religious opinion; and the fiercest persecutor is he who should be deemed the most furious madman.

***Unto strange cities.***— Places out of the jurisdiction of the Jews, such as Damascus, which he immediately mentions.

**Verse 12. *Whereupon as I went to Damascus***— See the whole account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus explained at large, in the notes on Acts 9:2, etc.

**Verse 16. *But rise*, etc.**— The particulars mentioned here, and in the two following verses, are not given in Acts 9:1-9, nor in Acts 22:6-11, where he gives an account of his conversion. He has detailed the different circumstances of that important event, as he saw it necessary; and perhaps there were several others which then took place, that he had no opportunity of mentioning, because there was nothing in succeeding occurrences which rendered it necessary to produce them.

***To make thee a minister***— ὑπηρέτην, An under-rower; that is, one who is under the guidance and authority of another; an assistant, or servant. So Paul was to act solely under the authority of Jesus Christ; and tug hard at

the oar, in order to bring the vessel, through the tempestuous ocean, to the safe harbour. See the concluding observations on John 6, John 6:71.

***And a witness***— μαρτυρα, A martyr. Though this word literally means a witness, yet we apply it only to such persons as have borne testimony to the truth of God at the hazard and expense of their lives. In this sense, also, ancient history states St. Paul to have been a witness; for it is said he was beheaded at Rome, by the command of Nero.

***In the which I will appear***— Here Christ gives him to understand that he should have farther communications from himself; and this may refer either to those interpositions of Divine Providence by which he was so often rescued from destruction, or to those encouragements which he received in dreams, visions, trances, etc., or to that general inspiration under which he was enabled to apprehend and reveal the secret things of God, for the edification of the Church. To all of which may be added that astonishing power by which he was so often enabled to work miracles for the confirmation of the truth.

**Verse 17. *Delivering thee from the people***— From the Jews-and from the Gentiles, put here in opposition to the Jews; and both meaning mankind at large, wheresoever the providence of God might send him. But he was to be delivered from the malice of the Jews, that he might be sent with salvation to the Gentiles.

**Verse 18. *To open their eyes***— To be the instrument of informing their understanding in the things of God.

***To turn them from darkness to light***— From heathenism and superstition to the knowledge and worship of the true God.

***From the power of Satan unto God***— της εξουσιας του σατανα, From the authority and domination of Satan; for as the kingdom of darkness is his kingdom, so those who live in this darkness are under his dominion; and he has authority and right over them. The blessed Gospel of Christ is the means of bringing the soul from this state of spiritual darkness and wretchedness to the light and liberty of the children of God; and thus they are brought from under the power and authority of Satan, to be under the power and authority of GOD.

***That they may receive forgiveness of sins***— That all their sins may be pardoned, and their souls sanctified; for nothing less is implied in the phrase, **αφεσις αμαρτιων**, which signifies the taking away or removal of sins.

***And inheritance***— By remission of sins, i.e. the removal of the guilt and pollution of sin, they become children of God; and, if children, then heirs; for the children of the heavenly family shall alone possess the heavenly estate. And as the inheritance is said to be among them that are SANCTIFIED, this is a farther proof that **αφεσις αμαρτιων** signifies, not only the forgiveness of sins, but also the purification of the heart.

***By faith that is in me.***— By believing on Christ Jesus, as dying for their offenses, and rising again for their justification. Thus we see that not only this salvation comes through Christ, but that it is to be received by faith; and, consequently, neither by the merit of works, nor by that of suffering.

**Verse 19. *I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision***— This, O Agrippa, was the cause of my conversion from my prejudices and mal-practices against the doctrine of Christ. The vision was from heaven; I received it as such, and began to preach the faith which I had before persecuted.

**Verse 20. *But showed first unto them of Damascus***— He appears to have preached at Damascus, and in the neighboring parts of Arabia Deserta, for about three years; and afterwards he went up to Jerusalem. See Galatians 1:17, 18; and see the note on Acts 9:23.

***That they should repent***— Be deeply humbled for their past iniquities, and turn to God as their Judge and Savior, avoiding all idolatry and all sin; and thus do works meet for repentance; that is, show by their conduct that they had contrite hearts, and that they sincerely sought salvation from God alone. For the meaning of the word repentance, see the note on Matthew 3:2.

**Verse 21. *For these causes the Jews-went about to kill me.***— These causes may be reduced to four heads:-1. He had maintained the resurrection of the dead. 2. The resurrection of Christ, whom they had crucified and slain. 3. That this Jesus was the promised Messiah. 4. He had offered salvation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. He does not



mention the accusation of having defiled the temple, nor of disloyalty to the Roman government; probably, because his adversaries had abandoned these charges at his preceding trial before Festus: see Acts 25:8; and see Calmet.

**Verse 22. *Having-obtained help of God***— According to the gracious promise made to him: see Acts 26:17.

***Witnessing both to small and great***— Preaching before kings, rulers, priests, and peasants; fearing no evil, though ever surrounded with evils; nor slackening in my duty, notwithstanding the opposition I have met with both from Jews and Gentiles. And these continual interpositions of God show me that I have not mistaken my call, and encourage me to go forward in my work.

**Verse 23. *That Christ should suffer***— That the Christ, or Messiah, should suffer. This, though fully revealed in the prophets, the prejudices of the Jews would not permit them to receive: they expected their Messiah to be a glorious secular prince; and, to reconcile the fifty-third of Isaiah with their system, they formed the childish notion of two Messiahs—Messiah ben David, who should reign, conquer, and triumph; and Messiah ben Ephraim, who should suffer and be put to death. A distinction which has not the smallest foundation in the whole Bible.

As the apostle says he preached none other things than those which Moses and the prophets said should come, therefore he understood that both Moses and the prophets spoke of the resurrection of the dead, as well as of the passion and resurrection of Christ. If this be so, the favourite system of a learned bishop cannot be true; viz. that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was unknown to the ancient Jews.

***That he should be the first that should rise from the dead***— That is, that he should be the first who should rise from the dead so as to die no more; and to give, in his own person, the proof of the resurrection of the human body, no more to return under the empire of death. In no other sense can Jesus Christ be said to be the first that rose again from the dead; for Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite. A dead man, put into the sepulchre of the Prophet Elisha, was restored to life as soon as he touched the prophet's bones. Christ himself had raised the widow's son at Nain; and

he had also raised Lazarus, and several others. All these died again; but the human nature of our Lord was raised from the dead, and can die no more. Thus he was the first who rose again from the dead to return no more into the empire of death.

***And should show light unto the people***— Should give the true knowledge of the law and the prophets to the Jews; for these are meant by the term people, as in Acts 26:17. And to the Gentiles, who had no revelation, and who sat in the valley of the shadow of death: these also, through Christ, should be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and be made a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. That the Messiah should be the light both of the Jews and Gentiles, the prophets had clearly foretold: see Isaiah 60:1: Arise and shine, or be illuminated, for thy LIGHT is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And again, Isaiah 49:6: I will give thee for a LIGHT to the GENTILES, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth. With such sayings as these Agrippa was well acquainted, from his education as a Jew.

**Verse 24. *Paul, thou art beside thyself***— “Thou art mad, Paul!” “Thy great learning hath turned thee into a madman.” As we sometimes say, thou art cracked, and thy brain is turned. By the **τα πολλα γραμματα** it is likely that Festus meant no more than this, that Paul had got such a vast variety of knowledge, that his brain was overcharged with it: for, in this speech, Paul makes no particular show of what we call learning; for he quotes none of their celebrated authors, as he did on other occasions; see Acts 17:28. But he here spoke of spiritual things, of which Festus, as a Roman heathen, could have no conception; and this would lead him to conclude that Paul was actually deranged. This is not an uncommon case with many professing Christianity; who, when a man speaks on experimental religion, on the life of God in the soul of man—of the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins—of the witness of the Spirit, etc., etc., things essential to that Christianity by which the soul is saved, are ready to cry out, Thou art mad: he is an enthusiast: that is, a religious madman; one who is not worthy to be regarded; and yet, strange to tell, these very persons who thus cry out are surprised that Festus should have supposed that Paul was beside himself!

**Verse 25. *I am not mad, most noble Festus***— This most sensible, appropriate, and modest answer, was the fullest proof he could give of his sound sense and discretion. The title, **κρατιστε**, most noble, or most excellent, which he gives to Festus, shows at once that he was far above indulging any sentiment of anger or displeasure at Festus, though he had called him a madman; and it shows farther that, with the strictest conscientiousness, even an apostle may give titles of respect to men in power, which taken literally, imply much more than the persons deserve to whom they are applied. **κρατιστος**, which implies most excellent, was merely a title which belonged to the office of Festus. St. Paul hereby acknowledges him as the governor; while, perhaps, moral excellence of any kind could with no propriety be attributed to him.

***Speak forth the words of truth and soberness.***— **αληθειας και σωφροσυνης**, Words of truth and of mental soundness. The very terms used by the apostle would at once convince Festus that he was mistaken. The **σωφροσυνη** of the apostle was elegantly opposed to the **μανια** of the governor: the one signifying mental derangement, the other mental sanity. Never was an answer, on the spur of the moment, more happily conceived.

**Verse 26. *Before whom also I speak freely***— This is a farther judicious apology for himself and his discourse. As if he had said: Conscious that the king understands all these subjects well, being fully versed in the law and the prophets, I have used the utmost freedom of speech, and have mentioned the tenets of my religion in their own appropriate terms.

***This thing was not done in a corner.***— The preaching, miracles, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, were most public and notorious; and of them Agrippa could not be ignorant; and indeed it appears, from his own answer, that he was not, but was now more fully persuaded of the truth than ever, and almost led to embrace Christianity.

**Verse 27. *Believest thou the prophets?***— Having made his elegant compliment and vindication to Festus, he turns to Agrippa; and, with this strong appeal to his religious feeling, says, *Believest thou the prophets?* and immediately anticipates his reply, and, with great address, speaks for him, I know that thou believest. The inference from this belief necessarily was: “As thou believest the prophets, and I have proved that the prophets

have spoken about Christ, as suffering and, triumphing over death, and that all they say of the Messiah has been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, then thou must acknowledge that my doctrine is true.”

**Verse 28.** *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*— εν ολιγω με πειθεις χριστιανον γενεσθαι. This declaration was almost the necessary consequence of the apostle’s reasoning, and Agrippa’s faith. If he believed the prophets, see Acts 26:22, 23, and believed that Paul’s application of their words to Christ Jesus was correct, he must acknowledge the truth of the Christian religion; but he might choose whether he would embrace and confess this truth, or not. However, the sudden appeal to his religious faith extorts from him the declaration, Thou hast nearly persuaded me to embrace Christianity. How it could have entered into the mind of any man, who carefully considered the circumstances of the case, to suppose that these words of Agrippa are spoken ironically, is to me unaccountable. Every circumstance in the case proves them to have been the genuine effusion of a heart persuaded of the truth; and only prevented from fully acknowledging it by secular considerations.

**Verse 29.** *I would to God*, etc.— ευξαιμην αν τω θεω, και εν ολιγω και εν πολλω—So fully am I persuaded of the infinite excellence of Christianity, and so truly happy am I in possession of it, that I most ardently wish that not only thou, but this whole council, were not only almost, but altogether, such as I am, these CHAINS excepted. Thus, while his heart glows with affection for their best interests, he wishes that they might enjoy all his blessings, if possible, without being obliged to bear any cross on the account. His holding up his chain, which was probably now detached from the soldier’s arm, and wrapped about his own, must have made a powerful impression on the minds of his audience. Indeed, it appears they could bear the scene no longer; the king was overwhelmed, and rose up instantly, and so did the rest of the council, and went immediately aside; and, after a very short conference among themselves, they unanimously pronounced him innocent; and his last word, των δεσμων, BONDS! and the action with which it was accompanied, had made such a deep impression upon their hearts that they conclude their judgment with that very identical word δεσμων. Would to God, says the apostle, that all who hear me this day were altogether such as as I am,

except these BONDS! The whole council say-This man hath done nothing worthy of death nor of BONDS! δεσμῶν, BONDS, is echoed by them from the last words of the apostle; as we may plainly perceive that, seeing such an innocent and eminent man suffering such indignity had made a deep impression upon their hearts. Alas! why should such a man be in B-O-N-D-S!

**Verse 32.** *Then said Agrippa*, etc.— The king himself, who had participated in the strongest emotions on the occasion, feels himself prompted to wish the apostle's immediate liberation; but this was now rendered impracticable, because he had appealed to Caesar; the appeal was no doubt registered, and the business must now proceed to a full hearing. Bp. Pearce conjectures, with great probability, that Agrippa, on his return to Rome, represented Paul's case so favourably to the emperor, or his ministers of state, that he was soon set at liberty there, as may be concluded from Acts 28:30, that he dwelt two whole years in his own hired place; and to the same cause it seems to have been owing that Julius, who had the care of Paul as a prisoner in the ship, treated him courteously; see Acts 27:3, 43. And the same may be gathered from Acts 28:14, 16. So that this defense of the apostle before Agrippa, Bernice, Festus, etc., was ultimately serviceable to his important cause.

1. THE conversion of Saul was a wonderful work of the Spirit of God; and, as we have already seen, a strong proof of the truth of Christianity; and the apostle himself frequently appeals to it as such.

2. His mission to the Gentiles was as extraordinary as the calling of the Gentiles itself. Every thing is supernatural in a work of grace; for, because nature cannot produce the effects, the grace of God, which implies the co-operation of his omniscience, omnipotence, and endless mercy, undertakes to perform the otherwise impossible task.

3. From the commission of St. Paul, we see the state in which the Gentile world was, previously to the preaching of the Gospel.

1. Their eyes are represented as closed; their understanding was darkened; and they had no right apprehension of spiritual or eternal things.

2. They were in a state of darkness; living without the knowledge of the true God, in a region where nothing but ignorance prevailed.

3. They were under the dominion and authority of Satan; they were his vassals, and he claimed them as his right.
4. They were in a state of guiltiness; living, in almost every respect, in opposition to the dictates even of nature itself.
5. They were polluted; not only irregular and abominable in their lives, but also impure and unholy in their hearts. Thus far their state.

Behold what the grace of the Gospel is to do for these Gentiles, in order to redeem them from this state: —

1. It opens their eyes; gives them an understanding, whereby they may discern the truth; and, without this illumination from above, the truth of God can never be properly apprehended.
2. It turns them from the darkness to the light; a fine metaphor, taken from the act of a blind man, who is continually turning his eyes towards the light, and rolling his eyes upwards towards the sun, and in all directions, that he may collect as many of the scattered rays as he can, in order to form distinct vision. In this way the Gentiles appeared to be, in vain, searching after the light, till the Gospel came, and turned their eyes to the Sun of righteousness.
3. They are brought from under the bondage and slavery of sin and Satan, to be put under the obedience of Jesus Christ. So that Christ and his grace as truly and as fully rule and govern them as sin and Satan did formerly. This is a proof that the change is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.
4. He pardons their sin, so that they are no longer liable to endless perdition.
5. He sanctifies their nature, so that they are capable of loving and serving him fervently with pure hearts; and are thus rendered fit for the enjoyment of the inheritance among the saints in light.

Such a salvation, from such a bondage, does the Gospel of Christ offer to the Gentiles—to a lost world. It is with extreme difficulty that any person can be persuaded that he needs a similar work of grace on his heart to that which was necessary for the conversion of the Gentiles. We may rest

assured that no man is a Christian merely by birth or education. If Christianity implies the life of God in the soul of man -the remission of sins-the thorough purification of the heart, producing that holiness without which none can see the Lord, then it is evident that God alone can do this work, and that neither birth nor education can bestow it. By birth, every man is sinful; by practice, every man is a transgressor; for all have sinned. God alone, by faith in Christ Jesus, can save the sinner from his sins. Reader, has God saved thee from this state of wretchedness, and brought thee “into the glorious liberty of his children?” Let thy conscience answer for itself.

## CHAPTER 27.

*It being determined that Paul should be sent to Rome, he is delivered to Julius, a centurion, 1. They embark in a ship of Adramyttium, and come the next day to Sidon, 2, 3. They sail thence, and pass Cyprus, Cilicia, and Pamphylia, and come to Myra, 4, 5. They are transferred there to a ship of Alexandria going to Italy; sail past Cnidus, Crete, Salmone, and come to the Fair Havens, 6-8. Paul predicts a disastrous voyage, 9-11. They sail from the Fair Havens, in order to reach Crete, and winter there; but, having a comparatively favorable wind, they sail past Crete, and meet with a tempest, and are brought into extreme peril and distress, 12-20. Paul's exhortation and prediction of the loss of the ship, 21-26. After having been tossed about in the Adriatic Sea, for many days, they are at last shipwrecked on the island of Melita; and the whole crew, consisting of two hundred and seventy-six persons, escape safe to land, on broken fragments of the ship, 27-44.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 27.

**Verse 1.** *And when it was determined*, etc.— That is, when the governor had given orders to carry Paul to Rome, according to his appeal; together with other prisoners who were bound for the same place.

*We should sail*— By this it is evident that St. Luke was with Paul; and it is on this account that he was enabled to give such a circumstantial account of the voyage.

*Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band*.— Lipsius has found the name of this cohort on an ancient marble; see Lips. in Tacit. Hist. lib. ii. The same cohort is mentioned by Suetonius, in his life of Nero, 20.

**Verse 2.** *A ship of Adramyttium*— There were several places of this name; and in different MSS. the name is variously written. The port in question appears to have been a place in Mysia, in Asia Minor. And the abbé Vertot, in his history of the Knights of Malta, says it is now called Mehedia. Others think it was a city and seaport of Africa, whence the ship



mentioned above had been fitted out; but it is more probable that the city and seaport here meant is that on the coast of the AEgean Sea, opposite Mitylene, and not far from Pergamos. See its situation on the map.

***Aristarchus, a Macedonian***— We have seen this person with St. Paul at Ephesus, during the disturbances there, Acts 19:29, where he had been seized by the mob, and was in great personal danger. He afterwards attended Paul to Macedonia, and returned with him to Asia, Acts 20:4. Now, accompanying him to Rome, he was there a fellow prisoner with him, Colossians 4:10, and is mentioned in St. Paul's epistle to Philemon, Philemon 24, who was probably their common friend.—Dodd. Luke and Aristarchus were certainly not prisoners at this time, and seem to have gone with St. Paul merely as his companions, through affection to him, and love for the cause of Christianity. How Aristarchus became his fellow prisoner, as is stated Colossians 4:10, we cannot tell, but it could not have been at this time.

**Verse 3. *Touched at Sidon***— For some account of this place, see the notes on Matthew 11:21; and Acts 12:20.

***Julius courteously entreated Paul***— At the conclusion of the preceding chapter, it has been intimated that the kind treatment which Paul received, both from Julius and at Rome, was owing to the impression made on the minds of Agrippa and Festus, relative to his innocence. It appears that Julius permitted him to go ashore, and visit the Christians which were then at Sidon, without using any extraordinary precautions to prevent his escape. He was probably accompanied with the soldier to whose arm he was chained; and it is reasonable to conclude that this soldier would fare well on St. Paul's account.

**Verse 4. *We sailed under Cyprus***— See on Acts 4:36.

**Verse 5. *Pamphylia***— See on Acts 2:10.

***Myra, a city of Lycia.***— The name of this city is written variously in the MSS., Myra, Murrha, Smyra, and Smyrna. Grotius conjectures that all these names are corrupted, and that it should be written Limyra, which is the name both of a river and city in Lycia. It is certain that, in common conversation, the first syllable, li, might be readily dropped, and then Myra, the word in the text, would remain. Strabo mentions both Myra and

Limyra, lib. xiv. p. 666. The former, he says, is twenty stadia from the sea, **ἐπι μετεωρου λοφου**, upon a high hill: the latter, he says, is the name of a river; and twenty stadia up this river is the town Limyra itself. These places were not far distant, and one of them is certainly meant.

**Verse 6. *A ship of Alexandria***— It appears, from Acts 27:38, that this ship was laden with wheat, which she was carrying from Alexandria to Rome. We know that the Romans imported much corn from Egypt, together with different articles of Persian and Indian merchandise.

**Verse 7. *Sailed slowly many days***— Partly because the wind was contrary, and partly because the vessel was heavy laden.

***Over against Cnidus***— This was a city or promontory of Asia, opposite to Crete, at one corner of the peninsula of Caria. Some think that this was an island between Crete and a promontory of the same name.

***Over against Salmone***— We have already seen that the island formerly called Crete is now called Candia; and Salmone or Sammon, or Samonium, now called Cape Salamon, or Salamina, was a promontory on the eastern coast of that island.

**Verse 8. *The Fair Havens***— This port still remains, and is known by the same name; it was situated towards the northern extremity of the island.

***Was the city of Lasea.***— There is no city of this name now remaining: the Codex Alexandrinus reads **αλασσα**, Alassa; probably Lysia, near the port of Gortyna, to the eastward.

**Verse 9. *Sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past***— It is generally allowed that the fast mentioned here was that of the great day of atonement which was always celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month, which would answer to the latter end of our September; see Leviticus 16:29; 23:27, etc. As this was about the time of the autumnal equinox, when the Mediterranean Sea was sufficiently tempestuous, we may suppose this feast alone to be intended. To sail after this feast was proverbially dangerous among the ancient Jews. See proofs in Schoettgen.

**Verse 10. *I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt***, etc.— Paul might either have had this intimation from the Spirit of God, or from his own

knowledge of the state of this sea after the autumnal equinox, and therefore gave them this prudent warning.

**Verse 11. *The centurion believed the master***— τῷ κυβερνητῇ, the pilot; and owner of the ship, τῷ ναυκλήρῳ, the captain and proprietor. This latter had the command of the ship and the crew; the pilot had the guidance of the vessel along those dangerous coasts, under the direction of the captain; and the centurion had the power to cause them to proceed on their voyage, or to go into port, as he pleased; as he had other state prisoners on board; and probably the ship itself was freighted for government. Paul told them, if they proceeded, they would be in danger of shipwreck; the pilot and captain said there was no danger; and the centurion, believing them, commanded the vessel to proceed on her voyage. It is likely that they were now in the port called the Fair Havens.

**Verse 12. *Might attain to Phoenice***— It appears that the Fair Havens were at the eastern end of the island, and they wished to reach Phoenice, which lay farther towards the west.

***Toward the south-west and north-west.***— κατὰ λιβὰ καὶ κατὰ χωρὸν. The libs certainly means the south-west, called libs, from Libya, from which it blows towards the AEgean Sea. The chorus, or caurus, means a north-west wind. Virgil mentions this, Geor. iii. ver. 356.

*Semper hyems, semper spirantes frigora cauri.*

*“It is always winter; and the cauri, the north-westers,  
ever blowing cold.”*

Dr. Shaw lays down this, and other winds, in a Greek compass, on his map, in which he represents the drifting of St. Paul’s vessel from Crete, till it was wrecked at the island of Melita. Travels, p. 331, 4to. edit.

**Verse 13. *When the south wind blew softly***— Though this wind was not very favorable, yet, because it blew softly, they supposed they might be able to make their passage.

***They sailed close by Crete.***— Kept as near the coast as they could. See the track on the map.

**Verse 14. A tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.**— Interpreters have been greatly perplexed with this word; and the ancient copyists not less so, as the word is variously written in the MSS. and versions. Dr. Shaw supposes it to be one of those tempestuous winds called levanters, which blow in all directions, from N.E. round by the E. to S.E. The euroclydon, from the circumstances which attended it, he says, “seems to have varied very little from the true east point; for, as the ship could not bear, *αντοφθαλμειν*, loof up, against it, Acts 27:15, but they were obliged to let her drive, we cannot conceive, as there are no remarkable currents in that part of the sea, and as the rudder could be of little use, that it could take any other course than as the winds directed it. Accordingly, in the description of the storm, we find that the vessel was first of all under the island Clauda, Acts 27:16, which is a little to the southward of the parallel of that part of the coast of Crete from whence it may be supposed to have been driven; then it was tossed along the bottom of the Gulf of Adria, Acts 27:27, and afterwards broken to pieces, Acts 27:41, at Melita, which is a little to the northward of the parallel above mentioned; so that the direction and course of this particular euroclydon seems to have been first at east by north, and afterwards, pretty nearly east by south.” These winds, called now levanters, and formerly, it appears, euroclydon, were no determinate winds, blowing always from one point of the compass: euroclydon was probably then, what levanter is now, the name of any tempestuous wind in that sea, blowing from the north-east round by east to the south-east; and therefore St. Luke says, there rose against it (i.e. the vessel) a tempestuous wind called euroclydon; which manner of speaking shows that he no more considered it to be confined to any one particular point of the compass, than our sailors do their levanter. Dr. Shaw derives *ευροκλυδων* from *ευρου κλυδων*, an eastern tempest, which is the very meaning affixed to a levanter at the present day.

The reading of the Codex Alexandrinus is *ευρακυλων*, the north-east wind, which is the same with the euro-aquilo of the Vulgate. This reading is approved by several eminent critics; but Dr. Shaw, in the place referred to above, has proved it to be insupportable.

Dr. Shaw mentions a custom which he has several times seen practised by the Mohammedans in these levanters:—After having tied to the mast, or ensign staff, some apposite passage from the Koran, they collect money,

sacrifice a sheep, and throw them both into the sea. This custom, he observes, was practised some thousand years ago by the Greeks: thus Aristophanes: —

αρν', αρνα μελαιναν, παιδες, εξενεγκατε·  
τυφως γαρ εκβαινειν παρασκευαζεται.

Ran. Act. iii. s. 2, ver. 871.

A lamb! boys, sacrifice a black lamb immediately:  
For a tempest is about to burst forth.

Virgil refers to the same custom: —

*Sic fatus, meritos aris mactavit honores:  
Taurum Neptuno, taurum tibi, pulcher Apollo;  
Nigram hyemi pecudem, zephyris felicibus albam.*

*AEn. iii. ver. 118.*

*Thus he spake, and then sacrificed on the altars the proper eucharistic victims: —  
A bull to Neptune, and a bull to thee, O beautiful Apollo;  
A black sheep to the north wind, and a white sheep to the west.*

And again: —

*Tres Eryci vitutos, et tempestatibus agnam,  
Caedere deinde jubet.*

*AEn. v. ver. 772.*

*Then he commanded three calves to be sacrificed to Eryx,  
and a lamb to the tempests.*

In the days of the Prophet Jonah the mariners in this sea were accustomed to do the same. Then they offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and vowed vows; John1:16. See Shaw's Travels, 4 to. edit. p. 329-333.

The heathens supposed that these tempests were occasioned by evil spirits: and they sacrificed a black sheep in order to drive the demon away. See the ancient Scholiast on Aristophanes, in the place cited above.

Sir George Staunton (Embassy to China, vol. ii. p. 403) mentions a similar custom among the Chinese, and gives an instance of it when the yachts and barges of the embassy were crossing the Yellow River: —

“The amazing velocity with which the Yellow River runs at the place where the yacht and barges of the embassy were to cross it rendered, according to the notions of the Chinese crews, a sacrifice necessary to the spirit of the river, in order to insure a safe passage over it. For this purpose, the master, surrounded by the crew of the yacht, assembled upon the forecastle; and, holding as a victim in his hand a cock, wrung off his head, which committing to the stream, he consecrated the vessel with the blood spouting from the body, by sprinkling it upon the deck, the masts, the anchors, and the doors of the apartments; and stuck upon them a few of the feathers of the bird. Several bowls of meat were then brought forward, and ranged in a line across the deck. Before these were placed a cup of oil, one filled with tea, one with some ardent spirit, and a fourth with salt; the captain making, at the same time, three profound inclinations of his body, with hands uplifted, and muttering a few words, as if of solicitation to the deity. The loo, or brazen drum, was beaten in the meantime forcibly; lighted matches were held towards heaven; papers, covered with tin or silver leaf, were burnt; and crackers fired off in great abundance by the crew. The captain afterwards made libations to the river, by emptying into it, from the vessel’s prow, the several cups of liquids; and concluded with throwing in also that which held the salt. All the ceremonies being over, and the bowls of meat removed, the people feasted on it in the steerage, and launched afterwards, with confidence, the yacht into the current. As soon as she had reached the opposite shore, the captain returned thanks to heaven, with three inclinations of the body.

“Besides the daily offering and adoration at the altar erected on the left or honorable side of the cabin in every Chinese vessel, the solemn sacrifices above described are made to obtain the benefit of a fair wind, or to avert any impending danger. The particular spot upon the forecastle, where the principal ceremonies are performed, is not willingly suffered to be occupied or defiled by any person on board.”

**Verse 15. *And when the ship was caught***— *συναρπασθεντος δε του πλοιου*. The ship was violently hurried away before this strong levanter; so that it was impossible for her, *αντοφθαλμειν*, to face the wind, to turn her prow to it, so as to shake it out, as I have heard sailors say, and have seen them successfully perform in violent tempests and squalls.

*We let her drive.*— We were obliged to let her go right before this tempestuous wind, whithersoever it might drive her.

**Verse 16.** *A certain island-called Claudia*— Called also Gaudos; situated at the south-western extremity of the island of Crete, and now called Gozo, according to Dr. Shaw.

*Much work to come by the boat*— It was likely to have been washed overboard; or, if the boat was in tow, at the stern of the vessel, which is probable, they found it very difficult to save it from being staved, or broken to pieces.

**Verse 17.** *Undergirding the ship*— This method has been used even in modern times. It is called frapping the ship. A stout cable is slipped under the vessel at the prow, which they can conduct to any part of the ship's keel; and then fasten the two ends on the deck, to keep the planks from starting: as many rounds as they please may be thus taken about the vessel. An instance of this kind is mentioned in Lord Anson's Voyage round the World. Speaking of a Spanish man-of-war in a storm: "They were obliged to throw overboard all their upper-deck guns, and take six turns of the cable round the ship, to prevent her opening." P. 24, 4to. edit. The same was done by a British line-of-battle ship in 1763, on her passage from India to the Cape of Good Hope.

*The quicksands*— εἰς τὴν συρτιν, Into the syrt. There were two famous syrts, or quicksands, on the African coast; one called the syrtis major, lying near the coast of Cyrene; and the other, the syrtis minor, not far from Tripoli. Both these, like our Goodwin Sands, were proverbial for their multitude of ship-wrecks. From the direction in which this vessel was driven, it is not at all likely that they were in danger of drifting on any of these syrts, as the vessel does not appear to have been driven near the African coast through the whole of her voyage. And as to what is said, Acts 27:27, of their being driven up and down in Adria, διαφερομενων εν τω αδρια, it must mean their being tossed about near to Sicily, the sea of which is called Adria, according to the old Scholiast upon Dionysius's Periegesis, ver. 85: το σικελικον τουτο το πελαγος αδριαν καλουσι· they call this Sicilian sea, Adria. We are therefore to consider that the apprehension, expressed in Acts 27:17, is to be taken generally: they were afraid of falling into some shoals, not knowing in what part of the sea they

then were; for they had seen neither sun nor stars for many days; and they had no compass, and consequently could not tell in what direction they were now driving. It is wrong therefore to mark the course of this voyage, as if the vessel had been driven across the whole of the Mediterranean, down to the African coast, and near to the syrts, or shoal banks; to which there is scarcely any reason to believe she had once approximated during the whole of this dangerous voyage.

**Strake sail**— *χαλασαντες το σκευος*. What this means is difficult to say. As to striking or slackening sail, that is entirely out of the question, in such circumstances as they were; when it is evident they could carry no sail at all, and must have gone under bare poles. Some think that lowering the yards, and taking down the top-mast, is what is intended; but in such a perilous situation this would have been of little service. Others think, letting go their main or sheet anchor, is what is meant; but this seems without foundation, as it would have been foolishness in the extreme to have hoped to ride out the storm in such a sea. Passing by a variety of meanings, I suppose cutting away, or by some means letting down the mast, is the action intended to be expressed here; and this would be the most likely means of saving the vessel from foundering.

**Verse 18. *Lightened the ship***— Of what, we know not; but it was probably cumbrous wares, by which the deck was thronged, and which were prejudicial to the due trim of the vessel.

**Verse 19. *The tackling of the ship***.— *την σκευην*; All supernumerary anchors, cables, baggage, etc.

**Verse 20. *Neither sun nor stars in many days appeared***— And consequently they could make no observation; and, having no magnetical needle, could not tell in what direction they were going.

**Verse 21. *After long abstinence***— *πολλης δε ασιτιας υπαρχουσης*. Mr. Wakefield connects this with the preceding verse, and translates it thus: Especially as there was a great scarcity of provisions. But this by no means can agree with what is said, Acts 27:34-38. The vessel was a corn vessel; and they had not as yet thrown the wheat into the sea, see Acts 27:38. And we find they had food sufficient to eat, but were discouraged,



and so utterly hopeless of life that they had no appetite for food: besides, the storm was so great that it is not likely they could dress any thing.

***Have gained this harm and loss.***— It seems strange to talk of gaining a loss, but it is a correct rendering of the original, κερδησαι, which expresses the idea of acquisition, whether of good or evil. Those who wish it, may see this use of the term well illustrated by Bp. Pearce, in his note on this verse. The harm was damage to the vessel; the loss was that of the merchandise, furniture, etc.

**Verse 22. *There shall be no loss of-life***— This must be joyous news to those from whom all hope that they should be saved was taken away: Acts 27:20.

**Verse 23. *The-God, whose I am, and whom I serve***— This Divine communication was intended to give credit to the apostle and to his doctrine; and, in such perilous circumstances, to speak so confidently, when every appearance was against him, argued the fullest persuasion of the truth of what he spoke; and the fulfillment, so exactly coinciding with the prediction, must have shown these heathens that the God whom Paul served must be widely different from theirs.

**Verse 24. *God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.***— Two hundred and seventy-six souls saved for the sake of one man! This was a strong proof of God's approbation of Paul; and must at least have shown to Julius the centurion that his prisoner was an injured and innocent man.

**Verse 26. *We must be cast upon a certain island.***— The angel which gave him this information did not tell him the name of the island. It turned out to be Melita, on which, by the violence of the storm, they were wrecked some days after.

**Verse 27. *Driven up and down in Adria***— See the note on Acts 27:17.

***Deemed that they drew near to some country***— They judged so, either by the smell of land, which those used to the sea can perceive at a considerable distance, or by the agitation of the sea, rippling of the tide, flight of sea-birds, etc.

**Verse 28. *And sounded***— βολισαντες, Heaving the lead.

**Twenty fathoms**— οργυιας εικοσι, About forty yards in depth. The οργυια is thus defined by the Etymologicon: σημαίνει την εκτασιν των χειρων, συν τω πλατει του στηθους. It signifies the extent of the arms, together with the breadth of the breast. This is exactly the quantum of our fathom.

**Verse 29. *Cast four anchors out of the stern***— By this time the storm must have been considerably abated; though the agitation of the sea could not have subsided much. The anchors were cast out of the stern to prevent the vessel from drifting ashore, as they found that, the farther they stood in, the shallower the water grew; therefore they dropped the anchor astern, as even one ship's length might be of much consequence.

**Verse 30. *The shipmen***— The sailors-let down the boat. Having lowered the boat from the deck into the sea, they pretended that it was necessary to carry some anchors ahead, to keep her from being carried in a dangerous direction by the tide, but with the real design to make for shore, and so leave the prisoners and the passengers to their fate. This was timely noticed by the pious and prudent apostle; who, while simply depending on the promise of God, was watching for the safety and comfort of all.

**Verse 31. *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.***— God, who has promised to save your lives, promises this on the condition that ye make use of every means he has put in your power to help yourselves. While, therefore, ye are using these means, expect the co-operation of God. If these sailors, who only understand how to work the ship, leave it, ye cannot escape. Therefore prevent their present design. On the economy of Divine Providence, see the notes on Acts 23:35.

**Verse 32. *The soldiers cut off the ropes***— These were probably the only persons who dared to have opposed the will of the sailors: this very circumstance is an additional proof of the accuracy of St. Luke.

**Verse 33. *While the day was coining on***— It was then apparently about day-break.

***This day is the fourteenth day that ye have-continued fasting***— Ye have not had one regular meal for these fourteen days past. Indeed we may take it for granted that, during the whole of the storm, very little was eaten by

any man: for what appetite could men have for food, who every moment had death before their eyes?

**Verse 34. *A hair fall from the head***— A proverbial expression for, ye shall neither lose your lives nor suffer any hurt in your bodies, if ye follow my advice.

**Verse 35. *Gave thanks to God***— Who had provided the food, and preserved their lives and health to partake of it. Some think that he celebrated the holy eucharist here: but this is by no means likely: he would not celebrate such a mystery among ungodly sailors and soldiers, Jews and heathens; nor was there any necessity for such a measure.

**Verse 38. *They lightened the ship***— They hoped that, by casting out the lading, the ship would draw less water; in consequence of which, they could get nearer the shore.

**Verse 39. *They knew not the land***— And therefore knew neither the nature of the coast, nor where the proper port lay.

***A-creek with a shore***— *κολπον*, Sinum, a bay, with a shore; a neck of land perhaps on either side, running out into the sea, and this little bay or gulf between them; though some think it was a tongue of land, running out into the sea, having the sea on both sides, at the point of which these two seas met, Acts 27:41. There is such a place as this in the island of Malta, where, tradition says, Paul was shipwrecked; and which is called la Cale de St. Paul. See Calmet.

**Verse 40. *Taken up the anchors***— Weighed all the anchors that they had cast out of the stern. Some think the meaning of the word is, they slipped their cables; and so left the anchors in the sea. This opinion is expressed in the margin.

***Loosed the rudder bands***— Or, the bands of the rudders; for large vessels in ancient times had two or more rudders, one at the side, and another at the stern, and sometimes one at the prow. The bands, *ζευκτηριας*, were some kind of fastenings, by which the rudders were hoisted some way out of the water; for, as they could be of no use in the storm, and, should there come fair weather, the vessel could not do without them, this was a prudent way of securing them from being broken to pieces by the agitation

of the waves. These bands being loosed, the rudders would fall down into their proper places, and serve to steer the vessel into the creek which they now had in view.

***Hoisted up the mainsail***— *αρτεμονα* is not the mainsail, (which would have been quite improper on such an occasion,) but the jib, or triangular sail which is suspended from the foremast to the bowsprit; with this they might hope both to steer and carry in the ship.

**Verse 41. *Where two seas meet***— The tide running down from each side of the tongue of land, mentioned Acts 27:39, and meeting at the point.

***Ran the ship aground***— In striving to cross at this point of land, they had not taken a sufficiency of sea-room, and therefore ran aground.

***The forepart stuck fast***— Got into the sands; and perhaps the shore here was very bold or steep, so that the stem of the vessel might be immersed in the quicksands, which would soon close round it, while the stern, violently agitated with the surge, would soon be broken to pieces. It is extremely difficult to find the true meaning of several of the nautical terms used in this chapter. I have given that which appeared to me to be the most likely; but cannot absolutely say that I have everywhere hit the true meaning.

**Verse 42. *The soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners***— What blood-thirsty, cowardly villains must these have been! Though, through the providence of God, those poor men had escaped a watery grave, and had borne all the anxiety and distresses of this disastrous voyage, as well as the others, now that there is a likelihood of all getting safe to land that could swim, lest these should swim to shore, and so escape, those men, whose trade was in human blood, desired to have them massacred! We have not many traits in the histories of the most barbarous nations that can be a proper counterpart to this quintessence of humano-diabolic cruelty.

**Verse 43. *Willing to save Paul***, etc.— Had one fallen, for the reasons those cruel and dastardly soldiers gave, so must all the rest. The centurion save that Paul was not only an innocent, but an extraordinary and divine man; and therefore, for his sake, he prevented the massacre; and, unloosing every man's bonds, he commanded those that could to swim ashore and

escape. It is likely that all the soldiers escaped in this way, for it was one part of the Roman military discipline to teach the soldiers to swim.

**Verse 44. *And the rest***— That could not swim: some on boards, planks, spars, etc., got safe to land; manifestly by an especial providence of God; for how otherwise could the sick, the aged, the terrified, besides women and children, (of which, we may naturally suppose, there were some,) though on planks, get safe to shore?—where still the waves were violent, Acts 27:41, and they without either skill or power to steer their unsafe flotillas to the land? It was (in this case, most evidently) God who brought them to the haven were they would be.

1. PAUL had appealed to Caesar; and he must go to Rome to have his cause heard. God admitted of this appeal, and told his servant that he should testify of him at Rome; and yet every thing seemed to conspire together to prevent this appeal, and the testimony which the apostle was to bear to the truth of the Christian religion. The Jews laid wait for his life; and when he had escaped out of their hands, and from their territories, then the winds and the sea seemed to combine to effect his destruction. And God suffered all this malice of men, and war of elements, to fight against his servant, and yet overruled and counterworked the whole, so as to promote his own glory, and bring honor to his apostle. Had it not been for this malice of the Jews, Festus, Felix, Agrippa, Berenice, and many Roman nobles and officers, had probably never heard the Gospel of Christ. And, had it not been for Paul's tempestuous voyage, the 276 souls that sailed with him could not have had such displays of the power and wisdom of the Christians' God as must have struck them with reverence, and probably was the cause of the conversion of many. Had the voyage been smooth and prosperous, there would have been no occasion for such striking interferences of God; and, had it not been for the shipwreck, probably the inhabitants of Malta would not so soon have heard of the Christian religion. God serves his will by every occurrence, and presses every thing into the service of his own cause. This is a remark which we have often occasion to make, and which is ever in place. We may leave the government of the world, and the government of the Church, most confidently to God; hitherto he has done all things well; and his wisdom, power, goodness, and truth, are still the same.

2. In considering the dangers of a sea voyage, we may well say, with pious Quesnel, To what perils do persons expose themselves, either to raise a fortune, or to gain a livelihood! How few are there who would expose themselves to the same for the sake of God! They commit themselves to the mercy of the waves; they trust their lives to a plank and to a pilot; and yet it is often with great difficulty that they can trust themselves to the providence of God, whose knowledge, power, and goodness, are infinite; and the visible effects of which they have so many times experienced.

3. What assurance soever we may have of the will of God, yet we must not forget human means. The life of all the persons in this ship was given to St. Paul; yet he does not, on that account, expect a visible miracle, but depends upon the blessing which God will give to the care and endeavors of men.

4. God fulfils his promises, and conceals his almighty power, under such means and endeavors as seem altogether human and natural. Had the crew of this vessel neglected any means in their own power, their death would have been the consequence of their inaction and infidelity.

## CHAPTER 28.

*St. Paul, and the rest of the crew, getting safely ashore, find that the island on which they were shipwrecked is called Melita, 1. They are received with great hospitality by the inhabitants, 2. A viper comes out of the bundle of sticks, laid on the fire, and seizes on Paul's hand, 3. The people, seeing this, suppose him to be a murderer, and thus pursued by Divine vengeance, 4. Having shook it off his hand, without receiving any damage, they change their minds, and suppose him to be a god, 5, 6. Publius, the governor of the island, receives them courteously, and Paul miraculously heals his father, who was ill of a fever, etc., 7, 8. He heals several others also, who honor them much, and give them presents, 9, 10. After three months' stay, they embark in a ship of Alexandria, land at Syracuse, stay there three days, sail thence, pass the straits of Rhegium, and land at Puteoli; find some Christians there, tarry seven days, and set forward for Rome, 11-14. They are met at Appii Forum by some Christians, and Paul is greatly encouraged, 15. They come to Rome, and Julius delivers his prisoners to the captain of the guard, who permits Paul to dwell by himself only attended by the soldier that kept him, 16. Paul calls the chief Jews together, and states his case to them, 17-20. They desire to hear him concerning the faith of Christ, 21, 22; and, having appointed unto him a day, he expounds to them the kingdom of Christ, 23. Some believe, and some disbelieve; and Paul informs them that, because of their unbelief and disobedience, the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, 24-29. Paul dwells two years in his own hired house, preaching the kingdom of God, 30, 31.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 28.

**Verse 1.** *They knew that the island was called Melita.*— There were two islands of this name: one in the Adriatic Gulf, or Gulf of Venice, on the coast of Illyricum, and near to Epidaurus; the other in the Mediterranean Sea, between Sicily and Africa, and now called Malta. It is about fifty miles from the coast of Sicily; twenty miles long, and twelve miles in its greatest breadth; and about sixty miles in circumference. It is one immense

rock of white, soft freestone, with about one foot depth of earth on an average, and most of this has been brought from Sicily! It produces cotton, excellent fruits, and fine honey; from which it appears the island originally had its name; for **μελι**, meli, and in the genitive case, **μελιτος**, melitos, signifies honey. Others suppose that it derived its name from the Phoenicians, who established a colony in it, and made it a place of refuge, when they extended their traffic to the ocean, because it was furnished with excellent harbours: (on the E. and W. shores:) hence, in their tongue, it would be called **מליטה** Meliteh, escape or refuge, from **מלט** malat, to escape.

The Phaeacians were probably the first inhabitants of this island: they were expelled by the Phoenicians; the Phoenicians by the Greeks; the Greeks by the Carthaginians; the Carthaginians by the Romans, who possessed it in the time of the apostle; the Romans by the Goths; the Goths by the Saracens; the Saracens by the Sicilians, under Roger, earl of Sicily, in 1190. Charles V., emperor of Germany, took possession of it by his conquest of Naples and Sicily; and he gave it in 1525 to the knights of Rhodes, who are also called the knights of St. John of Jerusalem. In 1798, this island surrendered to the French, under Bonaparte, and in 1800, after a blockade of two years, the island being reduced by famine, surrendered to the British, under whose dominion it still remains (1814.) Every thing considered, there can be little doubt that this is the Melita at which St. Paul was wrecked, and not at that other island in the Adriatic, or Venitian Gulf, as high up northward as Illyricum. The following reasons make this greatly evident: 1. Tradition has unvaryingly asserted this as the place of the apostle's shipwreck. 2. The island in the Venitian Gulf, in favor of which Mr. Bryant so learnedly contends, is totally out of the track in which the euroclydon must have driven the vessel. 3. It is said, in Acts 28:11, that another ship of Alexandria, bound, as we must suppose, for Italy, and very probably carrying wheat thither, as St. Paul's vessel did, (Acts 27:38,) had been driven out of its course of sailing, by stress of weather, up to the Illyricum Melita, and had been for that cause obliged to winter in the isle. Now this is a supposition which, as I think, is too much of a supposition to be made. 4. In St. Paul's voyage to Italy from Melita, on board the Alexandrian ship that had wintered there, he and his companions landed at Syracuse, Acts 28:12, 13, and from thence went to



Rhegium. But if it had been the Illyrican Melita, the proper course of the ship would have been, first to Rhegium, before it reached Syracuse, and needed not to have gone to Syracuse at all; whereas, in a voyage from the present Malta to Italy, it was necessary to reach Syracuse, in Sicily, before the ship could arrive at Rhegium in Italy. See the map; and see Bp. Pearce, from whom I have extracted the two last arguments.

That Malta was possessed by the Phoenicians, before the Romans conquered it, Bochart has largely proved; and indeed the language to the present day, notwithstanding all the political vicissitudes through which the island has passed, bears sufficient evidence of its Punic origin. In the year 1761, near a place called Ben Ghisa, in this island, a sepulchral cave was discovered, in which was a square stone with an inscription in Punic or Phoenician characters, on which Sir Wm. Drummond has written a learned essay, (London, Valpy, 1810, 4to.,) which he supposes marks the burial place, at least of the ashes, of the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal. I shall give this inscription in Samaritan characters, as being the present form of the ancient Punic, with Sir Wm. Drummond's translation:

[*Samaritan MSS. majuscule*]

*Chadar Beth olam kabar Chanibaal*  
*Nakeh becaleth haveh, rach —*  
*m daeh Amos beshuth Chanib —*  
*aal ben Bar-melec.*

*“The inner chamber of the sanctuary of the sepulchre  
of Hannibal,  
Illustrious in the consummation of calamity.  
He was beloved;  
The people lament, when arrayed  
In order of battle,  
Hannibal the son of Bar-Melec.”*

As this is a curious piece, and one of the largest remains of the Punic language now in existence, and as it helps to ascertain the ancient inhabitants of this island, I thought it not improper to insert it here. For the illustration of this and several other points of Punic antiquity, I must refer the curious reader to the essay itself.

**Verse 2. *The barbarous people***— We have already seen that this island was peopled by the Phoenicians, or Carthaginians, as Bochart has proved, Phaleg. chap. xxvi.; and their ancient language was no doubt in use among them at that time, though mingled with some Greek and Latin terms; and this language must have been unintelligible to the Romans and the Greeks. With these, as well as with other nations, it was customary to call those **βαρβαροι**, barbarians, whose language they did not understand. St. Paul himself speaks after this manner in 1 Corinthians 14:11: If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a BARBARIAN, and he that speaketh shall be a BARBARIAN unto me. Thus Herodotus also, lib. ii. 158, says, **βαρβαρους παντας αιγυπτιοι καλεουσι τους μη σφι ομογλωσσους**. The Egyptians call all those BARBARIANS who have not the same language with themselves. And Ovid, when among the Getes, says, in Trist. ver. 10: —

*BARBARUS hic ego sum, quia non INTELLIGOR ulli.*

*“Here I am a barbarian, for no person understands me.”*

Various etymologies have been given of this word. I think that of Bp. Pearce the best. The Greeks who traded with the Phoenicians, formed this word from their observing that the Phoenicians were generally called by the name of their parent, with the word **בַּר** bar, prefixed to that name; as we find in the New Testament men called Bar-Jesus, Bar-Tholomeus, Bar-Jonas, Bar-Timeus, etc. Hence the Greeks called them **βαρ-βαροι**, meaning the men who are called Bar Bar, or have no other names than what begin with Bar. And because the Greeks did not understand the language of the Phoenicians, their first, and the Romans in imitation of them, gave the name of Barbarians to all such as talked in a language to which they were strangers.” No other etymology need be attempted; this is its own proof; and the Bar-melec in the preceding epitaph is, at least, collateral evidence. The word barbarian is therefore no term of reproach in itself; and was not so used by ancient authors, however fashionable it may be to use it so now.

***Because of the present rain and-of the cold.***— This must have been sometime in October; and, when we consider the time of the year, the tempestuousness of the weather, and their escaping to shore on planks,

spars, etc., wet of course to the skin, they must have been very cold, and have needed all the kindness that these well disposed people showed them. In some parts of Christianized Europe, the inhabitants would have attended on the beach, and knocked the survivors on the head, that they might convert the wreck to their own use! This barbarous people did not act in this way: they joined hands with God to make these sufferers live.

**Verse 3. *There came a viper out of the heat***— We may naturally suppose that there had been fuel laid before on the fire, and that the viper was in this fuel, and that it had been revived by the heat; and, when St. Paul laid his bundle on the fire, the viper was then in a state to lay hold on his hand.

**Verse 4. *The venomous beast***— το θηριον, The venomous animal; for θηριον is a general name among the Greek writers for serpents, vipers, scorpions, wasps, and such like creatures. Though the viper fastened on Paul's hand, it does not appear that it really bit him; but the Maltese supposed that it had, because they saw it fasten on his hand.

***Vengeance suffereth not to live.***— These heathens had a general knowledge of retributive justice; and they thought that the stinging of the serpent was a proof that Paul was a murderer. There is a passage in Bamidbar Rabba, fol. 239, that casts some light on this place. “Although the Sanhedrin is ceased, yet are not the four deaths ceased. For he that deserves stoning either falls from his house, or a wild beast tears and devours him. He that deserves burning either falls into the fire, or a serpent bites him. He that deserves cutting of with the sword is either betrayed into the power of a heathen kingdom, or the robbers break in upon him. He that deserves strangling is either suffocated in the water, or dies of a quinsy.” See Lightfoot.

As these people were heathens, it is not likely that they had any correct notion of the justice of the true God; and therefore it is most probable that they used the word δικη, not to express the quality or attribute of any being, but the goddess Dikà, or vindictive Justice, herself, who is represented as punishing the iniquities of men.

Hesiod makes a goddess of what the Maltese called δικη, or Justice: —

η δε τε παρθενος εστι δικη, διος εκγεγαυια,  
 κυδνη τ' αιδοιη τε θεοις, οι ολυμπον εχουσιν·  
 και ρ' οποτ' αν τις μιν βλαπτη σκολιως νοναζων.  
 αυτικα παρ δι πατρι καθεζομενη κρονιωνι  
 γηρυετ' ανθρωπων αδικον νοον·

Hesiod. Opera, ver. 254.

*JUSTICE, unspotted maid, derived from Jove,  
 Renown'd and reverenced by the gods above:  
 When mortals violate her sacred laws,  
 When judges hear the bribe and not the cause,  
 Close by her parent god, behold her stand,  
 And urge the punishment their sins demand.*

COKE.

**Verse 5. *Shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.***— This is a presumptive evidence that the viper did not bite St. Paul: it fastened on his hand, but had no power to injure him.

**Verse 6. *When he should have swollen***— *πιμπρασθαι*, When he should have been inflamed: by means of an acrid poison introduced into the blood, it is soon coagulated; and, in consequence, the extremities of the vessels become obstructed, strong inflammation takes place, and all the parts become most painfully swollen.

Lucan, ix. v. 791, gives a terrible account of this effect of the bite of a serpent: —

— *illi rubor igneus ora  
 Succendit, tenditque cutem, pereunte figura  
 Miscens cuncta tumor jam toto corpore major:  
 Humanumque egressa modum super omnia membra  
 Efflatur sanies late tollente veneno.  
 Ipse latet penitus, congesto corpore mersus;  
 Nec lorica tenet distenti corporis auctum.*

*And straight a sudden flame began to spread,  
 And paint his visage with a glowing red.  
 With swift expansion swells the bloated skin, )  
 Nought but an undistinguished mass is seen; }  
 While the fair human form lies lost within, )  
 The puffy poison spreads and heaves around,  
 Till all the man is in the monster drown'd.*

ROWE.

See other ensamples, in the notes on Numbers 21:6.

*Said that he was a god.*— As Hercules was one of the gods of the Phoenicians, and was worshipped in Malta under the epithet of *αλεξικακος*, the dispeller of evil, they probably thought that Paul was Hercules; and the more so, because Hercules was famous for having destroyed, in his youth, two serpents that attacked him in his cradle.

**Verse 7. *The chief man of the island***— The term *πρωτος*, CHIEF, used hereby St. Luke, was the ancient title of the governor of this island, as is evident from an inscription found in Malta, which runs thus: —

*λ. κ. ζιος, κυρ. ιππευς. πρμ. πρωτος μελιταιων.*

Lucius Caius, son of Quirinus, a Roman knight, CHIEF of the Melitese. See Bochart, Phaleg. and Chan. vol. i. chap. 498, etc., and Grotius. This title is another proof of the accuracy of St. Luke, who uses the very epithet by which the Roman governor of that island was distinguished.

**Verse 8. *The father of Publius lay sick***— *πυρετοις και δυσεντερια;* Of a fever and dysentery; perhaps a cholera morbus.

*Paul-prayed*— That God would exert his power; and laid his hands on him, as the means which God ordinarily used to convey the energy of the Holy Spirit, and healed him; God having conveyed the healing power by this means. In such a disorder as that mentioned here by St. Luke, where the bowels were in a state of inflammation, and a general fever aiding the dysentery in its work of death, nothing less than a miracle could have made an instantaneous cure in the patient. Such a cure was wrought, and even the heathens saw that it was the hand of God.

**Verse 9. *Others-which had diseases***— Luke was a physician; yet we do not find him engaging in these cures. As a medical man, he might have been of use to the father of Publius; but he is not even consulted on the occasion. Paul enters in to him, prays for him, lays his hands on him, and he is healed. The other diseased persons who are mentioned in this verse were doubtless healed in the same way.

**Verse 10. *Honoured us with many honors***— The word τιμη, as Bishop Pearce has remarked, is often used to signify a pecuniary recompense, or present. The Greek word seems to be thus used in 1 Timothy 5:17. Let the elders which rule well be accounted worthy of double HONOR, τιμης, which St. Chrysostom, on the place, explains thus: την των αναγκαιων χορηγιαν· a supplying them with all necessary things. Diodorus Siculus, and Xenophon, used the word in the same way. In the sense of a pecuniary recompense, or price, paid for any thing, the word τιμη is met with in 1 Corinthians 6:20; and 1 Corinthians 7:23. And in the Septuagint, Numbers 22:17; compared with Numbers 22:18; Psalm 8:5; and Psalm 49:12; Proverbs 3:9. Bp. Pearce.

***Such things as were necessary.***— They had before given them many presents, and now they gave them a good sea stock; all that was necessary for their passage.

**Verse 11. *After three months***— Supposing that they had reached Malta about the end of October, as we have already seen, then it appears that they left it about the end of January, or the beginning of February; and, though in the depth of winter, not the worst time for sailing, even in those seas, the wind being then generally more steady; and, on the whole, the passage more safe.

***Whose sign was Castor and Pollux.***— These were two fabulous semi-deities, reported to be the sons of Jupiter and Leda, who were afterwards translated to the heavens, and made the constellation called Gemini, or the Twins. This constellation was deemed propitious to mariners; and, as it was customary to have the images of their gods both on the head and stern of their ships, we may suppose that this Alexandrian ship had these on either her prow or stern, and that these gave name to the ship. We, who profess to be a Christian people, follow the same heathen custom: we have our ships called the Castor, the Jupiter, the Minerva, the Leda, (the mother of Castor and Pollux,) with a multitude of other demon gods and goddesses; so that, were ancient Romans or Grecians to visit our navy, they would be led to suppose that, after the lapse of more than 2000 years, their old religion had continued unaltered!

Virgil speaks of a vessel called the Tiger. AENEID, x. ver. 166: —

*Massicus aerata princeps secat aequora TIGRI.*

“*Massicus, chief, cuts the waves in the brazen-beaked TIGER.*”

Of another called the Chimera. AEn. v. ver. 118, 223: —

*Ingentemque Gyas ingenti mole CHIMAERAM.*

“*Gyas the vast Chimera’s bulk commands.*”

And of another called the Centaur. AEn. v. ver. 122, 155, 157: —

— *CENTAURO invehitur magna.*

“*Sergestus, in the great Centaur, took the leading place.*”

Besides these names, they had their tutelary gods in the ship, from whom they expected succor; and sometimes they had their images on the stern; and when they got safely to the end of their voyage, they were accustomed to crown these images with garlands: thus Virgil, Geor. i. ver. 304: —

*PUPPIBUS et laeti naute imposuere CORONAS.*

“*The joyous sailors place garlands on their sterns.*”

Several ancient fables appear to have arisen out of the names of ships. Jupiter is fabled to have carried off Europa, across the sea, in the shape of a bull; and to have carried away Ganymede, in the shape of an eagle. That is, these persons were carried away, one in a ship called Taurus, or Bull; and the other in one denominated Aquila, the Eagle. Why not Taurus, as well as Tigris? and why not Aquila, as well as Chimera?—which names did belong to ships, as we find from the above quotations.

**Verse 12. *Landing at Syracuse***— In order to go to Rome from Malta, their readiest course was to keep pretty close to the eastern coast of Sicily, in order to pass through the straits of Rhegium and get into the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Syracuse is one of the most famous cities of antiquity: it is the capital of the island of Sicily, and was built about 730 years before the Christian era. It lies 72 miles S. by E. of Messina, and about 112 of Palermo. Long. 15°. 30'. W., lat. 37°. 17'. N. In its ancient state, it was about 22 English miles in circumference; and was highly celebrated for the martial spirit of its

inhabitants. This was the birthplace of the illustrious Archimedes; who, when the city was besieged by the Romans, under Marcellus, about 212 years before Christ, defended the place with his powerful engines against all the valor and power of the assailants. He beat their galleys to pieces by huge stones projected from his machines; and by hooks, chains, and levers, from the walls, weighed the ships out of the water, and, whirling them round, dashed them in pieces against each other, or sunk them to the bottom: several also, he is said to have destroyed by his burning glasses. When the city was taken by treachery, Archimedes was found intensely engaged in the demonstration of a problem. A Roman soldier coming up, and presenting his dagger to his throat, he cried, “Stop, soldier, or thou wilt spoil my diagram!” The brute was unmoved, and murdered him on the spot.

This city was almost totally destroyed by an earthquake in 1693: its present population amounts to but about 18,000. Christianity, in some form or other, has existed here ever since St. Paul spent the three days in it, mentioned in the text.

**Verse 13. *We fetched a compass***— ὄθεν περιελθόντες, Whence we coasted about. This will appear evident, when the coast of Sicily is viewed on any correct map, of a tolerably large scale.

***Rhegium***— A city and promontory in Calabria, in Italy, opposite to Sicily. It is now called Reggio. It had its name, ῥηγιον, Rhegium, from the Greek ῥηγνυμι, to break off; because it appears to have been broken off from Sicily.

***The south wind blew***— This was the fairest wind they could have from Syracuse, to reach the straits of Rhegium.

***The next day to Puteoli***— This place, now commonly called Pozzuoli, is an ancient town of Naples in the Terra di Lavoro; and is supposed to have been founded by the Samians, about 470 years before Christ. Within this city are several warm baths, very highly celebrated; and from these, and its springs in general, it seems to have had its ancient name Puteoli, from PUTEI, wells or pits; though some derive it from putor, a stench, or bad smell, because of the sulphureous exhalations from its warm waters. Varro gives both these etymologies, lib. iv. de Ling. Lat. cap. 5. It is famous for



its temple of Jupiter Serapis, which is built, not according to the Grecian or Roman manner, but according to the Asiatic. Near this place are the remains of Cicero's villa, which are of great extent. The town contains, at present, about 10,000 inhabitants. Long. 14°. 40'. E., lat. 41°. 50'. N.

**Verse 14. *Where we found brethren***— That is, Christians; for there had been many in Italy converted to the faith of Christ, some considerable time before this, as appears from St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, written some years before this voyage.

***We went toward Rome.***— One of the most celebrated cities in the universe, the capital of Italy, and once of the whole world; situated on the river Tiber, 410 miles SSE. of Vienna; 600 SE. of Paris; 730 E. by N. of Madrid; 760 W. of Constantinople; and 780 SE. of London. Long. 12°. 55'. E., lat. 41°. 54'. N. This famous city was founded by Romulus, at the end of the seventh Olympiad, A.M. 3251; of the flood, 1595; and 753 years before the Christian aera. The history of this city must be sought for in works written expressly on the subject, of which there are many. Modern Rome is greatly inferior to ancient Rome in every respect. Its population, taken in 1709, amounted to 138,569 souls only; among whom were 40 bishops, 2686 priests, 3359 monks, 1814 nuns, 893 courtizans, between 8 and 9000 Jews, and 14 Moors. This city, which once tyrannized over the world by its arms, and over the whole Christian world by its popes, is now reduced to a very low state among the governments of Europe, by whom it is supported, for it has no power sufficient for its own defense.

**Verse 15. *When the brethren heard of us***— By whom the Gospel was planted at Rome is not known: it does not appear that any apostle was employed in this work. It was probably carried thither by some of those who were converted to God at the day of pentecost; for there were then at Jerusalem, not only devout men, proselytes to the Jewish religion, from every nation under heaven, Acts 2:5, but there were strangers of Rome also, Acts 2:10. And it is most reasonable to believe, as we know of no other origin, that it was by these Christianity was planted at Rome.

***As far as Appii Forum***— About 52 miles from Rome; a long way to come on purpose to meet the apostle! The Appii Forum, or Market of Appius, was a town on the Appian way, a road paved from Rome to Campania, by the consul Appius Claudius. It was near the sea, and was a famous resort

for sailors, peddlers, etc. Horace, lib. i. Satyr. 5, ver. 3, mentions this place on his journey from Rome to Brundisium: —

— *Inde FORUM APPI*  
*Differtum nautis, cauponibus atque malignis.*

*“To Forum Appii thence we steer, a place  
Stuff’d with rank boatmen, and with vintners base.”*

This town is now called Caesarilla de S. Maria.

*And the Three Taverns*— This was another place on the same road, and about 33 miles from Rome. Some of the Roman Christians had come as far as Appii Forum: others, to the Three Taverns. Bp. Pearce remarks, there are some ruins in that place which are now called Tre Taverne; and this place Cicero mentions in his epistles to Atticus, lib. ii. 11. *Ab Appi Foro hora quarta: dederam aliam paulo ante in Tribus Tabernis.* “Dated at ten in the morning, from Appii Forum. I sent off another (epistle) a little before, from the Three Taverns.”

Zosimus, lib. 2, mentions *τρια καπηλεια*, the three taverns, or victualling houses, where the Emperor Severus was strangled by the treason of Maximinus Hercules, and his son Maxentius. See Lightfoot.

The word *taberna*, from *trabs*, a beam, signifies any building formed of timber; such as those we call booths, sheds, etc., which are formed of beams, planks, boards, and the like; and therefore we may consider it as implying, either a temporary residence, or some mean building, such as a cottage, etc. And in this sense Horace evidently uses it, *Carm. lib. i. Od. iv. ver. 13: —*

*Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas  
Regumque turres.*

*“With equal pace, impartial Fate  
Knocks at the palace as the cottage gate.”*

FRANCIS.

This place, at first, was probably a place for booths or sheds, three of which were remarkable; other houses became associated with them in process of time, and the whole place denominated *Tres Tabernae*, from the

three first remarkable booths set up there. It appears to have been a large town in the fourth century, as Optatus mentions Felix a Tribus Tabernis, Felix of the Three Taverns, as one of the Christian bishops.

***Thanked God, and took courage.***— He had longed to see Rome; (see Romans 1:9-15;) and, finding himself brought through so many calamities, and now so near the place that he was met by a part of that Church to which, some years before, he had written an epistle, he gave thanks to God, who had preserved him, and took fresh courage, in the prospect of bearing there a testimony for his Lord and Master.

**Verse 16. *The captain of the guard***— στρατοπεδραρχη. This word properly means the commander of a camp; but it signifies the prefect, or commander of the pretorian cohorts, or emperor's guards.

Tacitus (Annal. lib. iv. cap. 2) informs us that, in the reign of Tiberius, Sejanus, who was then prefect of these troops, did, in order to accomplish his ambitious designs, cause them to be assembled from their quarters in the city, and stationed in a fortified camp near it; so that their commander is with peculiar propriety styled by St. Luke στρατοπεδραρχης, the commander of the camp. For the arrival of St. Paul at Rome was in the seventh year of Nero; and it is certain, from Suetonius, (in Tiber. cap. 37,) that the custom of keeping the pretorian soldiers in a camp, near the city, was retained by the emperors succeeding Tiberius; for the historian observes that Claudius, at his accession to the empire, was received into the camp, in castra delatus est, namely, of the pretorian cohorts; and so Tacitus says of Nero, An. lib. xii. cap. 69, that on the same occasions illatus castris, he was brought into the camp. Dr. Doddridge observes that it was customary for prisoners who were brought to Rome to be delivered to this officer, who had the charge of the state prisoners, as appears from the instance of Agrippa, who was taken into custody by Macro, the pretorian prefect, who succeeded Sejanus; (Joseph. Ant. lib. xviii. cap. 7. sec. 6;) and from Trajan's order to Pliny, when two were in commission, Plin. lib. x. ep. 65. Vincetus mitti ad praefectos praetorii mei debet: he should be sent bound to the prefects of my guards. The person who now had that office was the noted Afranius Burrhus; but both before and after him it was held by two: Tacit. An. lib. xii. sec. 42; lib. xiv. sec. 51. See Parkhurst.

Burrhus was a principal instrument in raising Nero to the throne; and had considerable influence in repressing many of the vicious inclinations of that bad prince. With many others, he was put to death by the inhuman Nero. Burrhus is praised by the historians for moderation and love of justice. His treatment of St. Paul is no mean proof of this. Calmet.

*With a soldier that kept him.*— That is, the soldier to whom he was chained, as has been related before, Acts 12:6.

**Verse 17.** *Paul called the chief of the Jews together*— We have already seen, in Acts 18:2, that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome; see the note there: but it seems they were permitted to return very soon; and, from this verse, it appears that there were then chiefs, probably of synagogues, dwelling at Rome.

*I have committed nothing*— Lest they should have heard and received malicious reports against him, he thought it best to state his own case.

**Verse 20.** *For the hope of Israel I am bound*, etc.— As if he had said: This, and this alone, is the cause of my being delivered into the hands of the Romans; I have proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah; have maintained that though he was crucified by the Jews, yet he rose again from the dead; and, through him, I have preached the general resurrection of mankind: this all Israel professes to hope for; and yet it is on this account that the Jews persecute me. Both the Messiah and the resurrection might be said to be the hope of Israel; and it is hard to tell which of them is here meant: see Acts 13:6; 24:15, 21; 26:6. It is certain that, although the Jews believed in the general resurrection, yet they did not credit it in the manner in which Paul preached it; for he laid the foundation of the general resurrection on the resurrection of Christ.

**Verse 21.** *We neither received letters*, etc.— This is very strange, and shows us that the Jews knew their cause to be hopeless, and therefore did not send it forward to Rome. They wished for an opportunity to kill Paul: and, when they were frustrated by his appeal to the emperor, they permitted the business to drop. Calmet supposes they had not time to send; but this supposition does not appear to be sufficiently solid: they might have sent long before Paul sailed; and they might have written officially by the vessel in which the centurion and the prisoners were

embarked. But their case was hopeless; and they could not augur any good to themselves from making a formal complaint against the apostle at the emperor's throne.

**Verse 22. *For as concerning this sect***— See the note on Acts 24:14. A saying of Justin Martyr casts some light on this saying of the Jews: he asserts that the Jews not only cursed them in their synagogues, but they sent out chosen men from Jerusalem, to acquaint the world, and particularly the Jews everywhere, that the Christians were an atheistical and wicked sect, which should be, detested and abhorred by all mankind. Justin Martyr, Dial. p. 234.

**Verse 23. *To whom he expounded-the kingdom of God***— To whom he showed that the reign of the Messiah was to be a spiritual reign; and that Jesus, whom the Jewish rulers had lately crucified, was the true Messiah, who should rule in this spiritual kingdom. These two points were probably those on which he expatiated from morning to evening, proving both out of the law and out of the prophets. How easily Jesus, as the Messiah, and his spiritual kingdom, might be proved from the law of Moses, any person may be satisfied, by consulting the notes written on those books. As to the prophets, their predictions are so clear, and their prophecies so obviously fulfilled in the person, preaching, miracles, passion, and death of Jesus Christ, that it is utterly impossible, with any show of reason, to apply them to any other.

**Verse 24. *Some believed***, etc.— His message was there treated as his Gospel is to the present day: some believe, and are converted; others continue in obstinate unbelief, and perish. Could the Jews then have credited the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom, they would have found little difficulty to receive Jesus Christ as the MESSIAH.

Multitudes of those now called Christians can more easily credit Jesus as the Messiah than believe the spiritual nature of his kingdom. The cross is the great stumbling block: millions expect Jesus and his kingdom who cannot be persuaded that the cross is the way to the crown.

**Verse 25. *Agreed not among themselves***— It seems that a controversy arose between the Jews themselves, in consequence of some believing, and others disbelieving; and the two parties contested together; and, in respect

to the unbelieving party, the apostle quoted the following passage from Isaiah 6:9.

**Verse 26.** *Hearing ye shall hear*, etc.— See the notes on Matthew 13:14, and John 12:39, 40.

**Verse 28.** *The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles*— St. Paul had spoken to this effect twice before, Acts 13:46, and Acts 18:6, where see the notes; but here he uses a firmer tone, being out of the Jewish territories, and under the protection of the emperor. By the salvation of God, all the blessings of the kingdom of Christ are intended. This salvation God could have sent unto the Gentiles, independently of the Jewish disobedience; but He waited till they had rejected it, and then reprobated them, and elected the Gentiles. Thus the elect became reprobate, and the reprobate elect.

*They will hear it.*— That is, they will obey it; for ἀκούειν signifies, not only to hear, but also to obey.

**Verse 29.** *And had great reasoning among themselves.*— The believers contending with the unbelievers; and thus we may suppose that the cause of truth gained ground. For contentions about the truth and authenticity of the religion of Christ infallibly end in the triumph and extension of that religion.

**Verse 30.** *Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house*— As a state prisoner, he might have had an apartment in the common prison; but peculiar favor was showed him, and he was permitted to dwell alone, with the soldier that guarded him, Acts 28:16. Finding now an opportunity of preaching the Gospel, he hired a house for the purpose, and paid for it, St. Chrysostom observes, by the fruits of his own labor. Here he received all that came unto him, and preached the Gospel with glorious success; so that his bonds became the means of spreading the truth, and he became celebrated even in the palace of Nero, Philippians 1:12, 13; and we find that there were several saints, even in Caesar's household, Philippians 4:22, which were, no doubt, the fruits of the apostle's ministry. It is said that during his two years' residence here he became acquainted with Seneca, the philosopher, between whom and the apostle an epistolary correspondence took place. In an ancient MS. of Seneca's epistles in my

own possession, these letters are extant, and are in number fourteen and have a prologue to them written by St. Jerome. That they are very ancient cannot be doubted; but learned men have long ago agreed that they are neither worthy of Paul nor of Seneca.

While he was in captivity, the Church at Philippi, to which he was exceedingly dear, sent him some pecuniary assistance by the hands of their minister, Epaphroditus, who, it appears, risked his life in the service of the apostle, and was taken with a dangerous malady. When he got well, he returned to Philippi, and, it is supposed, carried with him that epistle which is still extant; and from it we learn that Timothy was then at Rome with Paul, and that he had the prospect of being shortly delivered from his captivity. See Philippians 1:12, 13; 2:25; 4:15, 16, 18, etc.

**Verse 31. *Preaching the kingdom of God***— Showing the spiritual nature of the true Church, under the reign of the Messiah. For an explanation of this phrase, see the note on Matthew 3:2.

***Those things which concern the Lord***— The Redeemer of the world was to be represented as the LORD; as JESUS; and as the CHRIST. As the Lord, **ὁ κύριος**, the sole potentate, upholding all things by the word of his power; governing the world and the Church; having all things under his control, and all his enemies under his feet; in short, the maker and upholder of all things, and the judge of all men. As Jesus-the Savior; he who saves, delivers, and preserves; and especially he who saves his people from their sins. For the explanation of the word JESUS, see the note on John 1:17. As Christ-the same as Messiah; both signifying the ANOINTED: he who was appointed by the Lord to this great and glorious work; who had the Spirit without measure, and who anoints, communicates the gifts and graces of that Spirit to all true believers. St. Paul taught the things which concerned or belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ. He proved him to be the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and expected by the Jews; he spoke of what he does as the Lord, what he does as Jesus, and what he does as Christ. These contain the sum and substance of all that is called the Gospel of Christ. Yet, the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, necessarily include the whole account of his incarnation, preaching in Judea, miracles, persecutions, passion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and his sending down the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. These were

the subjects on which the apostle preached for two whole years, during his imprisonment at Rome.

**With all confidence**— *παρρησιας*, Liberty of speech; perfect freedom to say all he pleased, and when he pleased. He had the fullest toleration from the Roman government to preach as he pleased, and what he pleased; and the unbelieving Jews had no power to prevent him.

It is supposed that it was during this residence at Rome that he converted Onesimus, and sent him back to his master Philemon, with the epistle which is still extant. And it is from Philemon 23, 24, of that epistle, that we learn that Paul had then with him Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke.

Here St. Luke's account of Paul's travels and sufferings ends; and it is probable that this history was written soon after the end of the two years mentioned in Acts 28:30.

That the apostle visited many places after this, suffered much in the great cause of Christianity, and preached the Gospel of Jesus with amazing success, is generally believed. How he came to be liberated we are not told; but it is likely that, having been kept in this sort of confinement for about two years, and none appearing against him, he was released by the imperial order.

Concerning the time, place, and manner of his death, we have little certainty. It is commonly believed that, when a general persecution was raised against the Christians by Nero, about A.D. 64, under pretense that they had set Rome on fire, both St. Paul and St. Peter then sealed the truth with their blood; the latter being crucified with his head downward; the former being beheaded, either in A.D. 64 or 65, and buried in the Via Ostiensis. EUSEBIUS, Hist, Eccles. lib. ii. cap. 25, intimates that the tombs of these two apostles, with their inscriptions, were extant in his time; and quotes as his authority a holy man of the name of Caius, who wrote against the sect of the Cataphrygians, who has asserted this, as from his personal knowledge. See Eusebius, by Reading, vol. i. p. 83; and see Dr. Lardner, in his life of this apostle, who examines this account with his usual perspicuity and candour. Other writers have been more particular concerning his death: they say that it was not by the command of Nero



that he was martyred, but by that of the prefects of the city, Nero being then absent; that he was beheaded at Aquae Salviae, about three miles from Rome, on Feb. 22; that he could not be crucified, as Peter was, because he was a freeman of the city of Rome. But there is great uncertainty on these subjects, so that we cannot positively rely on any account that even the ancients have transmitted to us concerning the death of this apostle; and much less on the accounts given by the moderns; and least of all on those which are to be found in the Martyrologists. Whether Paul ever returned after this to Rome has not yet been satisfactorily proved. It is probable that he did, and suffered death there, as stated above; but still we have no certainty.

THERE are several subscriptions to this book in different manuscripts: these are the principal: — The Acts of the Apostles — The Acts of the holy Apostles — The end of the Acts of the holy Apostles, written by Luke the Evangelist, and fellow traveler of the illustrious Apostle Paul — By the holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, etc. etc.

The versions are not less various in their subscriptions.

The end of the Acts, that is, the History of the holy Apostles.-SYRIAC.

Under the auspices and help of God, the book of the Acts of the pure Apostles is finished; whom we humbly supplicate to obtain us mercy by all their prayers. Amen. And may praise be ascribed to God, the Lord of the universe!-ARABIC.

This (book) of the Acts of the Apostles, which has been by many translated into the Roman tongue, is translated from the Roman and Greek tongue into the Aethiopic.-AETHIOPIC.

On the nature and importance of the Acts of the Apostles, see what is said in the preface to this book. To which may be added the following observations, taken from the conclusion of Dr. Dodd's Commentary.

“The plainness and simplicity of the narration are strong circumstances in its favor; the writer appears to have been very honest and impartial, and to have set down, very fairly, the objections which were made to Christianity, both by Jews and heathens, and the reflections which enemies cast upon it, and upon the first preachers of it. He has likewise,

with a just and honest freedom, mentioned the weaknesses, faults, and prejudices, both of the apostles and their converts. There is a great and remarkable harmony between the occasional hints dispersed up and down in St. Paul's epistles, and the facts recorded in this history; insomuch as that it is generally acknowledged that the history of the Acts is the best clue to guide us in the studying of the epistles written by that apostle. The other parts of the New Testament do likewise agree with this history, and give great confirmation to it; for the doctrines and principles are every where uniformly the same; the conclusions of the gospels contain a brief account of those things which are more particularly related in the beginning of the Acts. And there are frequent intimations, in other parts of the gospels, that such an effusion of the Spirit was expected; and that with a view to the very design which the apostles and primitive Christians are said to have carried on, by virtue of that extraordinary effusion which Christ poured out upon his disciples after his ascension; and, finally, the epistles of the other apostles, as well as those of St. Paul, plainly suppose such things to have happened as are related in the Acts of the Apostles; so that the history of the Acts is one of the most important parts of the sacred history, for neither the gospels nor epistles could have been so clearly understood without it; but by the help of it the whole scheme of the Christian revelation is set before us in an easy and manifest view.

“Even the incidental things mentioned by St. Luke are so exactly agreeable to all the accounts which remain of the best ancient historians, among the Jews and heathens, that no person who had forged such a history, in later ages, could have had that external confirmation, but would have betrayed himself by alluding to some customs or opinions since sprung up; or by misrepresenting some circumstance, or using some phrase or expression not then in use. The plea of forgery, therefore, in later ages, cannot be allowed; and for a man to have published a history of such things so early as St. Luke wrote; (that is, while some of the apostles and many other persons were alive who were concerned in the transactions which he has recorded;) if his account had not been punctually true, could have been only to have exposed himself to an easy confutation and certain infamy.

“As, therefore, the Acts of the Apostles are in themselves consistent and uniform, the incidental things agreeable to the best ancient historians which have come down to us, and the main facts supported and confirmed by the

other books of the New Testament, and by the unanimous testimony of so many of the ancient fathers, we may, I think, very fairly, and with great justness, conclude that, if any history of former times deserves credit, the Acts of the Apostles ought to be received and credited; and, if the history of the Acts of the Apostles be true, Christianity cannot be false: for a doctrine so good in itself, and attended with so many miraculous and Divine testimonies, has an the possible masks of a true revelation.”

On St. PAUL’S character and conduct, see the observations at the end of Acts 9:43, where the subject is particularly considered.

The book of the ACTS is not only a history of the Church, the most ancient and most impartial, as it is the most authentic extant, but it is also a history of God’s grace and providence, The manner in which he has exerted himself in favor of Christianity, and of the persons who were originally employed to disseminate its doctrines, shows us the highest marks of the Divine approbation. Had not that cause been of God, could he have so signally interposed in its behalf? Would he have wrought such a series of miracles for its propagation and support? And would all its genuine professors have submitted to sustain the loss of all things, had not his own Spirit, by its consolations in their hearts, given them to feel that his favor was better than life?

That the hardships suffered by the primitive apostles and Christians were great, the facts themselves related in this book sufficiently declare: that their consolation and happiness were abundant, the cheerful manner in which they met and sustained those hardships demonstrates. He who cordially embraced Christianity found himself no loser by it; if he lost earthly good in consequence, it was infinitely overbalanced by the spiritual good which he received. Paul himself, who suffered most, had this compensated by superabounding happiness. Wherever the Gospel comes, it finds nothing but darkness, sin, and misery; wherever it is received, it communicates light, holiness, and felicity. Reader, magnify thy God and Savior, who hath called thee to such a state of salvation. Should thou neglect it, how grievous must thy punishment be! Not only receive its doctrines, as a system of wisdom and goodness, but receive them as motives of conduct, and as a rule of life; and show thy conscientious belief

of them, by holding the truth in righteousness, and thus adorn these doctrines of God thy Savior in all things.-Amen.

I have often with pleasure, and with great advantage to my subject, quoted Dr. Lardner, whose elaborate works in defense of Divine revelation are really beyond all praise. The conclusion of his *Credibility of the Gospel History* is peculiarly appropriate; and the introduction of it here can need no apology. I hope, with him, I may also say: —

“I have now performed what I undertook, and have shown that the account given by the sacred writers of persons and things is confirmed by other ancient authors of the best note. There is nothing in the books of the New Testament unsuitable to the age in which they are supposed to have been written. There appears in these writers a knowledge of the affairs of those times, not to be found in authors of later ages. We are hereby assured that the books of the New Testament are genuine, and that they were written by persons who lived at or near the time of those events of which they have given the history.

“Any one may be sensible how hard it is for the most learned, acute, and cautious man, to write a book in the character of some person of an earlier age; and not betray his own time by some mistake about the affairs of the age in which he pretends to place himself; or by allusions to customs or principles since sprung up; or by some phrase or expression not then in use. It is no easy thing to escape all these dangers in the smallest performance, though it be a treatise of theory or speculation: these hazards are greatly increased when the work is of any length; and especially if it be historical, and be concerned with characters and customs. It is yet more difficult to carry on such a design in a work consisting of several pieces, written, to all appearance, by several persons. Many indeed are desirous to deceive, but all hate to be deceived; and therefore, though attempts have been made to impose upon the world in this way, they have never, or very rarely, succeeded; but have been detected and exposed by the skill and vigilance of those who have been concerned for the truth.

“The volume of the New Testament consists of several pieces: these are ascribed to eight several persons; and there are the strongest appearances that they were not all written by any one hand, but by as many persons as they are ascribed to. There are lesser differences in the relations of some

facts, and such seeming contradictions as would never have happened if these books had been all the work of one person, or of several who wrote in concert. There are as many peculiarities of temper and style as there are names of writers; divers of which show no depth of genius nor compass of knowledge! Here are representations of titles, posts, behavior of persons of higher and lower ranks in many parts of the world; persons are introduced, and their characters are set in a full light; here is a history of things done in several cities and countries; and there are allusions to a vast variety of customs and tenets, of persons of several nations, sects, and religions. The whole is written without affectation, with the greatest simplicity and plainness, and is confirmed by other ancient writers of unquestionable authority. If it be difficult for a person of learning and experience to compose a small treatise concerning matters of speculation, with the characters of a more early age than that in which he writes, it is next to impossible that such a work of considerable length, consisting of several pieces, with a great variety of historical facts, representations of characters, principles, and customs of several nations, and distant countries, of persons of ranks and degrees, of many interests and parties, should be performed by eight several persons, the most of them unlearned, without any appearance of concert.

“I might perhaps call this argument a demonstration, if that term had not been often misapplied by men of warm imagination, and been bestowed upon reasonings that have but a small degree of probability. But though it should not be a strict demonstration that these writings are genuine, or though it be not absolutely impossible, in the nature of the thing, that the books of the New Testament should have been composed in a later age than that to which they are assigned, and of which they have innumerable characters, yet, I think, it is in the highest degree improbable, and altogether incredible.

“If the books of the New Testament were written by persons who lived before the destruction of Jerusalem, that is, if they were written at the time in which they are said to have been written, the things related in them are true. If they had not been matter of fact, they would not have been credited by any persons near that time, and in those parts of the world in which they are said to have been done, but would have been treated as the most notorious lies and falsehoods. Suppose three or four books should

now appear amongst us, in the language most generally understood, giving an account of many remarkable and extraordinary events, which had happened in some kingdom of Europe, and in the most noted cities of the countries next adjoining to it; some of them said to have happened between sixty and seventy years ago, others between twenty and thirty, others nearer our own time; would they not be looked upon as the most manifest and ridiculous forgeries and impostures that ever were contrived? Would great numbers of persons in those very places, change their religious principles and practices upon the credit of things reported to be publicly done, which no man ever heard of before? Or, rather, is it possible that such a design as this would be conceived by any sober and serious persons, or even the most wild and extravagant? If the history of the New Testament be credible, the Christian religion is true. If the things that were related to have been done by Jesus, and by his followers, by virtue of powers derived from him, do not prove a person to come from God, and that his doctrine is true and divine, nothing can. And as Jesus does here, in the circumstances of his birth, life, sufferings, and after exaltation, and in the success of his doctrine, answer the description of the great person promised and foretold in the Old Testament, he is at the same time showed to be the Messiah.

“From the agreement of the writers of the New Testament with other ancient writers, we are not only assured that these books are genuine, but also that they are come down to us pure and uncorrupted, without any considerable interpolations or alterations. If such had been made in them, there would have appeared some smaller differences at least between them and other ancient writings.

“There has been in all ages a wicked propensity in mankind to advance their own notions and fancies by deceits and forgeries: they have been practised by heathens, Jews, and Christians, in support of imaginary historical facts, religious schemes and practices, and political interests. With these views some whole books have been forged, and passages inserted into others of undoubted authority. Many of the Christian writers of the second and third centuries, and of the following ages, appear to have had false notions concerning the state of Judea between the nativity of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem; and concerning many other things occasionally mentioned in the New Testament. The consent of the best

ancient writers with those of the New Testament is a proof that these books are still untouched, and that they have not been new modelled and altered by Christians of later times, in conformity to their own peculiar sentiments.

“This may be reckoned an argument that the generality of Christians had a very high veneration for these books; or else that the several sects among them have had an eye upon each other, that no alterations might be made in those writings to which they have all appealed. It is also an argument that the Divine providence has all along watched over and guarded these books, (a very fit object of especial care,) which contain the best of principles, were apparently written with the best views, and have in them inimitable characters of truth and simplicity.”-See Dr. Lardner’s WORKS, vol. i. p. 419.

Let him answer these arguments who can.-A. C.