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*Commentaries*

# **CLARKE'S COMMENTARY JOHN — ROMANS**

By

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*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

**Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World**

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**A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES**

ON THE

**HOLY BIBLE**

**OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS**

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

**BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.**

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE  
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

**For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we  
through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. xv. 4.**

**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 **#Mt 27:56**, with **#Mr 15:40**, and **#Mr 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, **#Mt 4:21, 22; #Mr 1:19, 20; #Lu 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 out 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 **#Joh 2:1**.

John was with our Lord in his transfiguration on the mount, **#Mt 17:2; #Mr 9:2; #Lu 9:28**; during his agony in the garden, **#Mt 26:37; #Mr 14:33**; and when he was crucified, **#Joh 19:26**.

He saw our Lord expire upon the cross, and saw the soldier pierce his side with a spear, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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, **#Ac 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, **#Ac 8:5-25**. St. Paul informs us, **#Ga 2:9**, that John was present at the council of Jerusalem, of which an account is given, **#Ac 15:4**, &c.

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 labours, 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*.

Irenæus, 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 Ægean 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, **#Joh 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 Saviour, 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 Saviour'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 Saviour 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

Saviour 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 Ænon, 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 Saviour 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 *Irenæus*, advers. Hæreses.

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 *Æons*; 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 favour; 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 *Æons*, 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, #Joh 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, **#Joh 1:18, 34; 3:35, 36**; the conversation of Christ with Nicodemus, **#Joh 3:16, 18**, in which Christ calls himself the *only begotten Son*; the speech delivered by Christ to the Jews, **#Joh 5:17-47**; and other passages, in which he calls God his Father.

"2. *The Word was never made, but existed from the beginning, #Joh 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, **#Joh 8:58**.

"3. *The Word was in the beginning with God, #Joh 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, #Joh 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 *Æon*, 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. {**#Joh 5:1ff; #Joh 10:30; #Joh 14:7, 11**}

"5. *The Word was the creator of all things*, **#Joh 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*, **#Joh 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 *Æon* from the *Word*. Without this *Æon*, 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 *Æon*, therefore, might be expected the resurrection of the dead and eternal life. The proofs of this position are in **#Joh 3:15, 21**; the whole of the sixth, and the greatest part of the eighth chapter, as also **#Joh 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. **See Clarke "Joh 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*, **#Joh 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 Æra of the World, 5503-5537.
- Rabbinical years of the World, 3754-3788.
- Years of the Julian Period, 4708-4742.
- Æra 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 Æra, 41-75.
- Years of the Cæsarean Æra of Antioch, 44-78.
- Years of the Spanish Æra, 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 Æras 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 Æras, gives the *second* date; e.g. *Usherian year of the world*, 3099+34=4033, and so of the rest.

### CHAPTER I.

*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. I.

John's introduction is from **#Joh 1:1-18**. Some harmonists suppose it to end with **#Joh 1:14**. but, from the connection of the whole, **#Joh 1:18** appears to be its natural close, at it contains a reason why the *Logos* or *Word was made flesh*. **#Joh 1:15** refers to **#Joh 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. **#Joh 1:16, 17** have a plain reference to **#Joh 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 **#Ge 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*, **#Joh 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 appellative of the Saviour 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 appellative of the Saviour 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*, **#Joh 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*, **#Re 19:10**; who has illustrated life and immortality by his Gospel, **#2Ti 1:10**; and who has fully made *manifest* the deep *mysteries* which lay hidden in the bosom of the invisible God from all eternity, **#Joh 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, αει οντα, τα γενομενα εγενετο*-by whom, eternally existing, all things were made. But as *Plato*, *Pythagoras*, *Zeno*, and others, travelled 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 **#Ge 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*, #1Co 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, #2Ti 1:10, to which he taught the way, #Joh 14:6, which he promised to believers, #Joh 10:28, which he purchased for them, #Joh 6:51, 53, 54, which he is appointed to give them, #Joh 17:2, and to which he will raise them up, #Joh 5:29, because he hath the life in himself, #Joh 5:26. All this may be proved: 1. From the like expressions; #1Jo 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*, #1Jo 5:20; *the resurrection and the life*, #Joh 11:25; *the way, the truth, and the life*, #Joh 14:6. 2. From these words, #Joh 1:7, *John came to bear witness of this light, that all might believe through him*, viz. to eternal life, #1Ti 1:16; for so John witnesseth, #Joh 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 #Ge 3:20: And Adam called his wife's name Eve, חַוָּה *chava*, ζωή, 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, #Eph 5:8. 2. The Jewish people. 3. The fallen spirit of man.

**Comprehended it not.**] αὐτοὺς οὐ κατέλαβεν, *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*, #2Pe 1:19. Compare #Ac 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, #Mr 1:4, and #Mt 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, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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 **#Isa 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, **#Ge 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.]** αὐτον οὐκ ἐγνώ-*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, **#Joh 1:3**, and by whom all things are continually supported, **#Col 1:16, 17**; **#Heb 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, **#Joh 3:19**.

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

The *Septuagint*, *Josephus*, and *Arrian*, use these words, τα ἰδιοι and οι ἱδιοι, 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 endeavours, 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, honour, 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 *honour* 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 αἱματων, *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, **#Joh 1:1**, in the fulness 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 **#Joh 1:1**, an absolute and incontestable proof of the proper and eternal Godhead of Christ Jesus?

**And dwelt among us**] **καὶ ἐσκηνώσεν 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 **σκιά**, *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 favoured 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, #Lu 1:68, translated from the *Sanscreet*, 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 favour! 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.

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(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 *Sanscreet* 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.



**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 particle *ως* should be here understood. There is also here an allusion to the manifestations of God above the ark in the tabernacle: see **#Ex 25:22**; **#Nu 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 favour, kindness, and mercy to men; teaching the way to the kingdom of God, with all the simplicity, plainness, dignity, and energy of *truth*.

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, **#Isa 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. {**#Joh 1:15-19**}

**And of his fulness]** 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 fulness 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 αισχυνηται*-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, **#Ac 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*: **#Heb 8:6; 9:15; #Ga 3:19**. See a fine discourse on this text by Mr. *Claude*, "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon," vol. i. p. 119, &c. 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*: **#Ro 4:15; #2Co 3:7, 8**. It was a law of *shadows*, *types*, and *figures*: **#Heb 10:1**, and incapable of expiating sin by its sacrifices: **#Ro 8:3; #Heb 7:18, 19; 10:1, 11**. But Christ has brought that *grace* which is opposed to *condemnation*: **#Ro 5:15, 20, 21; 8:1; #Ga 3:10**; and he is himself the *spirit* and *substance* of all those *shadows*: **#Col 2:19; #Heb 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 **#Mt 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 עִשָׂא *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 **#Zec 9:9**: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion-behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is JUST, and having SALVATION*:- עִשָׂא-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 יְשׁוּעָה 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 Hebrææ, 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 **#Joh 3:32; #1Jo 3:2, 6, and #3Jo 1:11**; and this sense the latter clause of the verse seems to require:-*No man*, how highly soever favoured, *hath fully known God, at any time*, in any nation or age; *the only begotten Son*, (see **Clarke on "Joh 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*, ἐξηγησατο, 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 favour 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 honoured him, and favoured 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 **#Mt 17:10**; and this belief of theirs they supported by a literal construction of **#Mal 4:5**.

**Art thou that prophet?]** the prophet spoken of by Moses, **#De 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 **#Ac 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, &c., 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 #Mt 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 Clarke's notes on "Mt 3:3"; and #Mr 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. {See **Ancillary Data**}

Verse 26. **I baptize with water]** See Clarke on "Mr 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 #Joh 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*, *Æthiopic*, *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. {#Joh 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, **#Joh 1:19**.

**Behold the Lamb of God, &c.]** This was said in allusion to what was spoken **#Isa 53:7**. Jesus was the true Lamb or Sacrifice required and appointed by God, of which those offered *daily* in the tabernacle and temple, **#Ex 29:38, 39**, and especially the *paschal* lamb, were only the types and representatives. See **#Ex 12:4, 5**; **#1Co 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, **#Re 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, &c.]** John did not know our Lord *personally*, and perhaps had never seen him, at the time he spoke the words in **#Joh 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, &c.]** See the notes on **#Mt 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 labours whithersoever he goeth.

Verse 35. **The next day]** After that mentioned **#Joh 1:29**.

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

Verse 36. **And looking upon Jesus]** *Attentively beholding*, εμβλεψας, from εν, *into*, and βλέπω, *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 neighbour? 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 **#Joh 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*, (εκτῇ ὥρᾳ.) 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* signifies, 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 endeavour 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.]** πέτρος 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 **#Mt 16:18, 19**, and particularly in Luke, at the end of chap 9. **See Clarke "Lu 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*, **#Mt 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 **#Ac 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 anywhere 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, **#Joh 21:2-4**.

**Moses in the law**] See **#Ge 3:16; 22:18; 49:10; #De 18:18**.

**And the prophets**] See **#Isa 4:2; 7:14; 9:5; 40:10; 53:1, &c.; #Jer 23:5; 33:14, 15; #Eze 34:23; 37:24; #Da 9:24; #Mic 5:2; #Zec 6:12; 9:9; 12:10**.

Verse 46. **Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?**] Bp. Pearce supposes that the **τὸ ἀγαθόν** of the evangelist has some particular force in it: for, in **#Jer 33:14**, God says, I will perform *that good thing* which I promised, &c.; and this, in **#Jer 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, **#Mt 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 endeavour 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**, &c.] 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 אמן 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 **#2Co 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, **#Ge**

**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 דְּבַר יְהוָה *debar yehovah, the Word of Jehovah*, #Ge 15:1, 4; #1Sa 3:7, 21; 15:10; #1Ki 13:9, 17; 19:9, 15; #Ps 107:20; and the *Targums*, or *Chaldee paraphrases*, frequently substitute מֵימְרָא דַּיִי *meymra d'yay, the word of the Lord*, for יְהוָה *Jehovah* himself. Thus the *Jerusalem Targum* in #Ge 3:22, and both that and the *Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel*, in #Ge 19:24. And *Onkelos*, on #Ge 3:8, for *the voice of the Lord God*, has, *the voice of the WORD of the Lord*. The *Jerusalem Targum* on #Ge 1:27, for, *And God created man*, has, *The WORD of Jehovah created*, &c. Compare *Targum Jonathan*, on #Isa 45:12; 48:13; #Jer 27:5. And on #Ge 22:14, that of *Jerusalem* says, *Abraham invoked*, בִּשְׁמֵי מֵימְרָא דַּיִי *beshem meymra d'yay, in the name of the WORD of the Lord*, and said, *THOU art Jehovah*. So *Onkelos*, #Ge 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 מֵימְרָא *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:-

[Arabic]

*Zalyka Isa 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 Judæus.*

After I had begun my collections from Philo Judæus relative to the *Logos*, I casually met with a work of the late very learned Mr. Jacob Bryant, entitled, *The sentiments of Philo Judæus 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 Judæus 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 Saviour 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) *ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς, ὁ πρωτογονὸς αὐτοῦ (θεοῦ) θεὸς λόγος,* *In which presides that High Priest, the holy WORD, the first-born of God;* at other times styled, *πρεσβυτάτος υἱὸς θεοῦ,* *the Son of God, antecedent to all creation.* (x) *τοῦτον μὲν γὰρ πρεσβυτάτον υἱὸν ὁ τῶν ὄντων ἀνετίλε πατήρ, ὃν ἑτέρῳθι πρωτογονὸν ὠνόμασε.* 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 αγγελης, 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 νας 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. De Agric. vol. i. p. 308; De Profug. ib. p. 562: compare #Mr 1:1; #Lu 4:41; #Joh 1:34; #Ac 8:37.
2. The second divinity-δευτερος θεος λογος. Fragm. vol. ii. p. 625: comp. #Joh 1:1; #1Co 1:24.
3. The first-begotten of God-λογος πρωτογονος. De Somniis, vol. i. p. 653: comp. #Heb 1:6; #Col 1:15.
4. The image of God-εικων του θεου. De Mundi Opific. vol. i. p. 6, 414, 419, 656. comp. #Col 1:15; #Heb 1:3; #2Co 4:4.
5. Superior to angels-υπερανω παντων (αγγελων) λογος θειος. De Profugis, vol. i. p. 561: comp. #Heb 1:4, 6.
6. Superior to all the world-ο λογος-υπερανω παντος εστι. De Leg. Allegor. vol. i. p. 121: comp. #Heb 2:8.
7. By whom the world was created-τον θειον λογον τον ταυτα διακοσμησαντα. De Mund. Opif. vol. i. p. 4: comp. #Joh 1:3; #1Co 8:6; #Heb 1:2, 10.
8. The great substitute of God-υπαρχος του θεου. De Agricult. vol. i. p. 308: comp. #Joh 1:3; 17:4; #Eph 3:9; #Php 2:7.
9. The light of the world-φως κοσμου: and intellectual sun-ηλιος νοητος. De Somniis, vol. i. p. 6, 414, 632, 633: comp. #Joh 1:4, 9; 8:12; #1Pe 2:9.



10. Who only can see God-*ω μονω τον θεον εξεστι καθοραν*. De *Confus. Linguar.* vol. i. p. 418: *comp.* **#Joh 1:18; 6:46.**

11. Who resides in God-*εν αυτω μονω κατοικησει*. De *Profug.* vol. i. p. 561: *comp.* **#Joh 1:1, 18; 14:11.**

12. The most ancient of God's works, and before all things-*πρεσβυτατος των οσα γεγονε*. De *Confus. Ling.* vol. i. p. 427; De *Leg. Allegor.* ib. p. 121: *comp.* **#Joh 1:2; 17:5, 24; #2Ti 1:9; #Heb 1:2.**

13. Esteemed the same as God-*λογον ως αυτον (θεον) κατανοουσι*. De *Somniis*, vol. i. p. 656: *comp.* **#Mr 2:7; #Ro 9:5; #Php 2:6.**

14. The Logos is eternal-*ο αιδιος λογος*. De *Plant. Noæ*, vol. i. p. 332, and vol. ii. p. 604: *comp.* **#Joh 12:34; #2Ti 1:9; 4:18; #Heb 1:8; #Re 10:6.**

15. Beholds all things-*οξυδερκεστατος, ως παντα εφοραν ειναι ικανος*. De *Leg. Allegor.* vol. i. p. 121: *comp.* **#Heb 4:12, 13; #Re 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*. De *Prof.* vol. i. p. 562; *Fragm.* vol. ii. p. 655: *comp.* **#Joh 3:35; #Col 1:17; #Heb 1:3.**

17. Nearest to God without any separation-*ο εγγυτατω μηδενος οντος μεθοριου διαστηματος*. De *Profug.* vol. i. p. 561: *comp.* **#Joh 1:18; 10:30; 14:11; 17:11.**

18. Free from all taint of sin, voluntary or involuntary-*ανευ τροπης εκουσιου-και της ακουσιου*. De *Profug.* vol. i. p. 561: *comp.* **#Joh 8:46; #Heb 7:26; 9:14; #1Pe 2:22.**

19. Who presides over the imperfect and weak-*ουτος γαρ ημων των ατελων αν ειη θεος*. De *Leg. Allegor.* vol. i. p. 128: *comp.* **#Mt 11:5; #Lu 5:32; #1Ti 1:15.**

20. The Logos, the fountain of wisdom-*λογον θειον, ος σοφιας εστι πηγη*. De *Profug.* vol. i. p. 560, 566: *comp.* **#Joh 4:14; #Joh 7:38; #1Co 1:24; #Col 2:3.**

21. A messenger sent from God-*πρεσβευτης του ηγεμονος προς το υπηκοον*. *Quis Rer. Div. Hæres.* vol. i. p. 501: *comp.* **#Joh 5:36; 8:29, 42; #1Jo 4:9.**

22. The advocate for mortal man-*ικετης μεν εστι του θνητου*. *Quis Rer. Div. Hær.* vol. i. p. 501: *comp.* **#Joh 14:16; 17:20; #Ro 8:34; #Heb 7:25.**

23. He ordered and disposed of all things-*διειλε και διενεψε παντα*. Ib. p. 506: *comp.* **#Col 1:15, 16; #Heb 11:3.**

24. The shepherd of God's flock-τον ορθον αυτου λογον,-ος την επιμελειαν της ιερας ταυτης αγγελης. De *Agricul.* vol. i. p. 308: *comp.* #Joh 10:14; #Heb 13:20; #1Pe 2:25.

25. Of the power and royalty of the Logos-ο του ηγεμονος λογος-και βασιλικη δυναμις αυτου. De *Profug.* vol. i. p. 561: *comp.* #1Co 15:25; #Eph 1:21, 22; #Heb 1:2, 3; #Re 17:14.

28. The Logos is the physician, who heals all evil-τον αγγελον (ος εστι λογος) ωσπερ ιατρον κακων. De *Leg. Allegor.* vol. i. p. 122: *comp.* #Lu 4:18; 7:21; #1Pe 2:24; #Jas 1:21.

27. The Logos is the seal of God-ο δε-εστιν η σφραγις. De *Profug.* vol. i. pp. 547, 548; De *Plant. Noæ*, ib. p. 332: *comp.* #Joh 6:27; #Eph 1:13; #Heb 1:3.

28. The sure refuge of those who seek him-εφ' ον πρωτον καταφευγειν-ωφελιμωτατον. De *Profug.* ib. p. 560: *comp.* #Mt 11:28; #1Pe 2:25.

29. Of heavenly food distributed by the Logos equally to all who seek it-την ουρανιον τροφην ψυχης. *Quis Rer. Divin. Hær.* vol. i. p. 499: *comp.* #Mt 5:6; 7:7; 13:10; 24:14; 28:19; #Ro 10:12, 18.

30. Of men's forsaking their sins, and obtaining spiritual freedom by the Logos-ελευθερια της ψυχης De *Cong. Quær. Erud. Grat.* vol. i. p. 534; De *Prof.* ib. pp. 561, 563: *comp.* #Joh 8:36; #1Co 7:22; #2Co 3:17; #Ga 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. De *Cong. Quær. Erud. Grat.* vol. i. p. 535: *comp.* #Ro 8:21; #1Co 15:52, 53; #1Pe 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*. De *Leg. Allegor.* vol. i. p. 129: *comp.* #Mt 3:17; #Lu 9:36; #Col 1:13; #2Pe 1:17.

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

34. The Logos, the true high priest-αρχιερευσ, ο πρωτογονος αυτου θειος λογος. De *Somniis*, vol. i. p. 653; De *Profug.* ib. p. 562: *comp.* #Joh 1:41; 8:46; #Ac 4:27; #Heb 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 ιερον 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. Hæres.* vol. i. p. 501: *comp.* #1Ti 2:5; #Heb 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.

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(a) Philo. *Fragm.* vol. ii. p. 625.

(b) De *Agricult.* vol. i. p. 303.

(c) De *Mundi Opif.* vol. i. p. 6.

(d) De *Agricult.* vol. i. p. 308.

(e) De *Mundi Opif.* vol. i. p. 4.

(f) De *Profugis.* vol. i. p. 561.

(g) De *Somniis*, vol. i. p. 656.

(h) De *Leg. Alleg.* vol. i. p. 121.

(i) De *Plantatione*. Næ, vol. i. p. 331.

(k) De *Confus. Ling.* vol. i. p. 418. l. 50

(l) *Quis Rerum Divin. Hæres.* vol. i. pp. 501, 502.

(m) Ibid. p. 501. l. 49.

(n) For κηραινοντος αει προς το αφθαρτον, we should certainly read, προς το φθαρτον.

(o) De *Profugis.* vol. i. p. 560. l. 31.

(p) The present reading is απλευστι, the meaning of which I do not comprehend. The true reading is probably απνευστι, from απνευστος, *without remission-indesinenter, without stopping to take breath.*

(q) De *Monarchia*, vol. ii. l. ii. p. 225. τον δε αορατον και νοητον θειον λογον εικονα λεγει θεου. De *Mundi Opif.* vol. i. p. 6.

(r) De *Somniis*, vol. i. p. 656. l. 33.

(s) *Quis Rerum Divin. Hæres.* vol. i. p. 502.

(t) De *Profugis.* vol. i. p. 561. l. 16.

(u) Ibid, 224.

(v) Ibid. p. 562. l. 13.

(w) De *Somniis*, vol. i. p. 653.

(x) De *Confus. Ling.* vol. i. p. 414.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER II.

*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. II.

Verse 1. **Cana of Galilee**] This was a small city in the tribe of Asher, **#Jos 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 **#Jos 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 **#Jud 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 **#Joh 1:37**, &c.,) were invited to it.

3. The *first* miracle Jesus Christ wrought was at it, and in honour 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 honourable 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 ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, 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 honour 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, **#Mt 15:28**; as he did the Samaritan woman, **#Joh 4:21**, as he addressed his disconsolate mother when he hung upon the cross, **#Joh 19:26**; as he did his most affectionate friend Mary Magdalene, **#Joh 20:15**, and as the angels had addressed her before, **#Joh 20:13**; and as St. Paul does the believing Christian woman, **#1Co 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, &c.**] 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 **#Mt 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 μεθυ, *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, #Ge 43:34; #So 5:1; 1 Macc. 16:16; #Hag 1:6; Eccus. 1:16. And the Prophet Isaiah, #Isa 58:11, speaking of the abundant blessings of the godly, compares them to a *watered garden*, which the Septuagint translate, ως κηπος μεθυων, 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: **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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, **#Lu 6:1**. The *third*, **#Joh 6:4**. And the *fourth*, which was that at which he was crucified, **#Joh 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, **#Da 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, &c.]** This is a *similar* fact to that mentioned **#Mt 21:12**; **#Mr 11:15**; **#Lu 19:45**. See it explained on **#Mt 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, **#Joh 2:11**; then he passes a few days at Capernaum, which bring him on his way to Jerusalem, **#Joh 2:12**. The passover being near, he goes up to Jerusalem, **#Joh 2:13**, and casts the traders out of the temple, **#Joh 2:15, 16**. At the passover he works many miracles, **#Joh 2:23**. While he is in Jerusalem, which city he does not leave till, **#Joh 3:22**, Nicodemus comes to him by night, **#Joh 3:1, 2**. **#Joh 3:2** contains a reference to **#Joh 2:23**. *After* these things, Jesus departs from Jerusalem, and dwells and baptizes in Judea, **#Joh 3:22**. And all these incidents take place *before* John was cast into prison, **#Joh 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 offence 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 #Ps 59:10. Zeal to promote thy glory, and to keep thy worship pure.

Verse 18. **What sign showest thou]** See on #Mt 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: Jos. 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, #Mt 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, Æthiopic, 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 #Ps 16:10. Compare this with #Ac 2:31, 32, and with #Ac 13:35-37. See also #Ps 2:7, and

compare it with **#Heb 1:5**, and **#Heb 5:5**, and with **#Ac 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 fulfilment 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, **#Joh 1:3**, and because he was the all-wise God, **#Joh 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!



## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER III.

*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 Ænon, 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. III.

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 **#Joh 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, &c.*

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, &c., 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 Clarke on "Joh 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 **#Mt 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 **#Joh 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 **#Mt 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 **#Joh 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 begat, 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, &c., 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*, **#Ro 8:16**; for, *he that believeth hath the witness in himself*, **#1Jo 4:13; 5:10; #Ga 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*, **#1Jo 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 at 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**, &c.] 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 **#De 30:12; #Ps 73:17; #Pr 30:4; #Ro 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, **#Nu 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 Clarke's note on "Nu 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, **#1Jo 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, &c.]** It was the opinion of the Jews that the Gentiles, whom they often term *the world*, **עלמה** *olmah*, and **אומות העולם** *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 **#Joh 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 favouring 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. **חשך** *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 practise 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 labour. 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 **φauλος**, *evil* or *vile*, is supposed by some to come from the Hebrew פלש *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*, Æn. 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 **φauλος**.

**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, **#Joh 7:50**, and, with Joseph of Arimathea, gave him an honourable funeral, **#Joh 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, **#Ac 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-**#Joh 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. **#Joh 4:2**, of the baptism administered by the disciples, after they had been called to the work by Christ.

Verse 23. **In Ænon]** 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 Ænon. The consideration that *they dipped themselves*, tends to remove the difficulty expressed in **Clarke's note on "Mt 3:6"**. See the observations at the end of Mark. {**See Ancillary Data**}

Verse 25. **John's disciples and the Jews]** Instead of *ιουδαίων*, *Jews*, ABELS. M. BV, nearly 100 others, some versions and fathers, read *ιουδαίου*, *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, &c.]** 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: **#Joh 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 **#Mt 22:2**, &c., where the parable of the *marriage feast* is explained.

**The friend of the bridegroom]** The person whom the Greeks called the *paranymp*-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. See **Clarke "Joh 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, **#Joh 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 Saviour 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 **#Joh 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, &c.*, 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, **#Ac 2:1**, &c., 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 Clarke on "Mt 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, &c.; 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 Clarke on "Joh 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, **#Ac 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, **#Heb 5:9**.

**But the wrath of God abideth on him]** *οργη*, 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 **#Ro 2:5; 3:5; 13:4, 5; #Eph 5:6; #1Th 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 {#Joh 3:29} is of great consequence, and requires some farther explanation.

The *friend of the bridegroom* is the person called among the Jews שושבין *shoshabin*; and παρανυμφος, *paranymp*, 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 *shoshabinan* had a *threefold* office to fulfil, 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, **#De 22:13-21**. Of their office, in this case, the rabbins thus speak: *Olim in Judea paranymphe perscrutati sunt locum (lectum) sponsi et sponsæ-ad scrutandum et officiose observandum ea, quæ 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, **#Joh 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, **#2Co 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, **#Jud 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 συνῶκησεν ἡ γυνὴ σαμψῶν τῷ συμπαύῳ 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 **#Joh 3:29**, and with the words of St. Paul, **#2Co 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 שׁוֹשְׁבֵינִיָּם 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*, **#Eph 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*, **#2Co 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 **#Joh 2:1**, and *Schoettgen*, on **#Joh 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 honours 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 **#Mt 3:8-12**, and on **#Lu 3:10-14**. He heard the bridegroom's voice-he faithfully communicated what he had received from heaven, **#Joh 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER IV.

*Jesus, finding that the Pharisees took offence 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. IV.

Verse 1. **Jesus made and baptized, &c.]** 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 Clarke on "**Joh 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 Clarke's note on "**Lu 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 (**#Isa 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, **#Ge 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*, **#Ge 33:19**; and in it he built an altar,



which he dedicated to *El Elohey Yishrael*, the strong God, the covenant God of Israel, **#Ge 33:20**. This, Jacob left as a private or overplus inheritance to Joseph and his children. See **#Ge 48:21, 22**, and **#Jos 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 travellers, 'That it is dry all the year round, except on the anniversary of that day on which our blessed Saviour 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 **Clarke's notes on "Joh 1:31"**. The *time* is noted here: 1. To account for Christ's *fatigue*-he had already travelled 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*, **#Joh 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 **Clarke's note on "Joh 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 **#Ge 24:11**, &c.; **#Ex 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 #Mr 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, συγχρῶνται, has been variously translated and understood. It comes from συν, *together*, and χρᾶμαι, *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, #Joh 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, #Joh 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 travellers 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 Salmanezar, king of the Assyrians. See #2Ki 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 misbehaviour 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 Clarke's note on "Mt 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**] οὗτος οὐ ἐστίν σου ἀνὴρ. 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: 1. 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, #Joh 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*, #Joh 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, **#Joh 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 **#Ge 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, **#De 27:4**, &c., where the Israelites are commanded to build an altar on mount EBAL, and offer sacrifices, &c., the Samaritan Pentateuch has GERIZIM instead of *Ebal*; and Dr. Kennicott strongly contends, Dissert. vol. ii. p. 20, &c., 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: **#Joh 4:21**. See Clarke's note on "**De 27:4**".

Verse 21. **The hour cometh**, &c.] 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*, &c. See **#Joh 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, **#2Ki 17:26-34**. But after Sanballat had built the temple on Mount Gerizim, the idolatrous worship of the Cutheans and Sepharvites, &c., 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 *Saviour*, the *Messiah*, as it does **#Lu 2:30; #Ac 4:12**: and so the woman appears

to have understood it, **#Joh 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 **#Isa 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. 2. 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 *οἶδα* *I know*, several excellent MSS. and versions read, *οἶδαμεν*, *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; **#Joh 1:38, 41, 42; 9:7**, &c.; 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*, **#Joh 4:9**, and a *prophet*, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 4:8.**

**Marvelled 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, &c.]** 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, **#Isa 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. *La 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 **#Joh 4:31-39**, inclusive, having taken place before the people of Sychar got to the well. See **#Joh 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, **#1Ki 17:4-6**, and by the ministry of an angel, **#1Ki 19:5-8**, and our Lord's preternatural repast in the wilderness, after his victory over Satan, **#Mt 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, labour 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 **#Le 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 קיץ *kyits*, SUMMER. Half *Ab*, all *Elul*, and half *Tisri*, is חם *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 **#Joh 5:1**, viz. the passover. See *Lightfoot*; and see **Clarke's note on "Joh 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, &c.*, for I have sent you to reap, to preach my Gospel, and gain converts, where ye have not laboured-have not sown the first seeds of eternal life. Others have laboured-the *patriarchs* and *prophets*, and ye are entered into the fruits of their labours. 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 labour. 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, **#Le 26:16**: *Ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.* **#Mic 6:15**: *Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but not anoint thee with the oil.* See also **#Ho 7:9**. The Greeks had the same proverb:  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota \mu\epsilon\nu \sigma\pi\epsilon\rho\upsilon\sigma\iota, \alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota \delta'\alpha\nu \alpha\mu\eta\sigma\sigma\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ . So had the Latins: *Alii leporum 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 labour*; i.e. I did not send you to the city (#Joh 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 labour 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, (#Joh 4:39-42.) These, and the many more which will believe upon hearing my doctrine, (#Joh 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 labour*. He farther adds, that the Greek *θερίζειν*, stands for *τοῦ θερίζειν*, 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 #Joh 4:29. This word, which is twice repeated, in #Joh 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, may others believed who had not heard the woman speak.

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

**The Saviour 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, &c. In **#Mt 13:57**; **#Mr 6:4**, and **#Lu 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 Clarke on "**Mt 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 **#Joh 2:23**.

Verse 46. **Where he made the water wine.]** See Clarke's notes on "**Joh 2:1**", &c. 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, βασιλικός, 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 **#Lu 8:3**; and others think it was *Manæn*, spoken of **#Ac 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, &c.]** 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 favoured 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 **#1Co 13:2**.

Verse 49. **Sir, come down, &c.]** 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, **#2Ki 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 fulness 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 travelled 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 ( חֶמָה *chomah*, ο πυρετος) left him, and he desired water to drink." *Schoettgen* very properly remarks, *Ovum ovo non magis simile est, atque hæc fabula narrationi evangelicæ*. "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 **#Joh 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, **#Joh 2:11**, nor those which he did at Jerusalem on the feast of the passover. See **#Joh 2:12**; **#Lu 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, **#Joh 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 Saviour 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, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 4:8**, and Jesus was left *alone*. Even this circumstance was not only *favourable* 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 **#Joh 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER V.

*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. V.

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, η εορτη, THE *feast*, the grand, the principal festival. *Petavius* supposes that the feast of *Purim*, or *lots*, is here meant; and one MS. reads η σκηνοπηγια, 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 **#Joh 7:2**, mention is made of the feast of *Tabernacles*, which followed *Pentecost*, and was about the latter end of our *September*; and, in **#Joh 10:22**, mention is made of the feast of *Dedication*, which was held about the latter end of November. See Bp. *Pearce*. See **#Joh 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, &c.

*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, **#Joh 2:13**; the *third*, **#Joh 6:4**; the *fourth*, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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 travellers to the present day. See *Maundrell's Jour.* p. 108. But instead of εστι, IS, both the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Persic*, *Armenian*, and *Nonnus*, read ην, 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 #Ne 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 #Ac 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, &c.*? 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 pretence, 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 *Æthiopic*, *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]** κατεβαλεν, *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 **#Zec 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]** *ναί, κύριε*-"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 **#Ex 20:8; #Jer 17:21; #Ne 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. 2. Christ showed by this that he was Lord of the sabbath: see **#Mt 12:8**. 3. This was not contrary to the spirit of the law: the sabbath was made to honour 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 centre 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, &c.]** 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, &c.*, *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-*ελευ, 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 #Nu 15:32; #Le 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*, #Joh 5:21. And *judging the world*, #Joh 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, #1Ki 17:22, by the ministry of the Prophet Elijah. And again, in the case of the Shunamite's son, #2Ki 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, #Mr 5:35-42; the widow's son at Nain, #Lu 7:11-15; and Lazarus, at Bethany, #Joh 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, #Joh 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 honour the Son, &c.]** If then the Son is to be honoured, EVEN AS the Father is honoured, 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 honoured even as the Father is honoured; therefore Christ is not a creature; and, if not a *creature*, consequently the *Creator*. See #Joh 1:3.



**He that honoureth not the Son]** God will not receive that man's adoration who refuses to honour Jesus, *even as* he honours 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*, *εις κρισιν*, *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.] μεταβηκεν**, 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, **#Joh 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 Clarke on "Joh 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, &c.]** 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 **#Joh 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 **#Da 7:13**, *Behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds*, &c., 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 Clarke on "**Joh 5:19**".

**I seek 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, **#Joh 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 **#Joh 8:14**, he says, *Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true*. And in **#Joh 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 **#Joh 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 **#Joh 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, **#Joh 5:36**.

**But these things I say, &c.]** 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, **#Joh 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]** *ἦν ὁ λυχνὸς ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων*, should be translated, *He was a burning and a shining LAMP*. He was not *τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου*, *the light of the world*, i.e. the *sun*; but he was *ὁ λυχνός*, *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 **Clarke's note on "Joh 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]** ἀγαλλιασθῆναι, 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 #Mt 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, (#Ps 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]** ερευνάτε τὰς γραφάς. 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 studieth 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 **ερευνάτε**, 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 ODYSS. xix. l. 436, to *dogs tracing* their game by the *scent* of the *foot*.

In the Septuagint, the verb **ερευνάω** answers to the Hebrew **חפש** *chaphash*, 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 honour 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, &c.]** Don't say that you oppose me through zeal for God's honour, 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 #Da 7:13, 14; #Isa 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; **#Ac 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 **Clarke's notes on "Mt 24:5"**.

Verse 44. **How can ye believe, which receive honour, &c.]** 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 honour 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*—*παρά του μονου θεου*. 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, **#Ge 49:10**. *The sceptre 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 **#De 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, &c.* Confer this with **#Ac 3:22**, and **#Ac 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 Saviour of the world. Add to this, Moses has given you certain marks to distinguish the *false* from the *true* prophet, **#De 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, &c.]** 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, **#2Co 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: #2Co 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, #2Co 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER VI.

*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. VI.

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, #Lu 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 Clarke on "Jo 6:22".

Verse 2. **They saw his miracles which he did]** John does not mention these miracles; but Matthew details them, #Mt 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 #Mr 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 Clarke's note on "Joh 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 **#Mt 14:13**, &c.; **#Mr 6:31**, &c.; **#Lu 9:10**, &c.

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

From **#Joh 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 {**#Joh 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 *αγορασμεν*, *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*, **#Joh 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. **#Mt 14:14, 15; #Mr 6:34, 35; #Lu 9:11, 12.**

Verse 7. **Two hundred pennyworth]** This sum, rating the *denarius* at 7 3/4d., would amount to 6£. 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 **#Mt 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]** *παιδαριον*, 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 **#Re 6:6**. That it was a very *mean* fare appears from **#Eze 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, &c.*, 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 **Clarke on "Joh 21:5"**.

Verse 10. **There was much grass in the place.]** Perhaps newly *mown grass*, or *hay*, is meant, (so the Vulgate *fenum*,) 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 **#Joh 6:4**.

Verse 11. **Jesus took the loaves]** See the notes on **#Mt 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 פסא *peah*, or residue after a meal, was the property of the servitors.

Verse 14. **This is of a truth that prophet]** Spoken of, **#De 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 **#Joh 6:3**.

St. Matthew, **#Mt 14:22, 23**, and Mark, **#Mr 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 **#Joh 6:17**, and the note on **#Mr 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 *splendour*-no saving change can be brought about by any *might* or any *power*, but by *the Spirit of the Lord of hosts*. #Zec 4:6.

Verse 17. **Toward Capernaum.**] St. Mark says, #Mr 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*: #Mt 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, &c., a *coasting voyage* only is meant, as we find the disciples landing on the same side from which they had departed: see Clarke's note on "Joh 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 Clarke's notes on "Mt 14:25", &c.

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**] ἑσθηκως 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 #Mt 14:25, 34, and on #Mr 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 #Jos 5:1. and 1 Macc. 9:34. The Hebrew word אַבָּר *abar*, signifies *by the side*: #Ex 28:26, and is translated *on this side* in #De 4:29. It has the same meaning in the Septuagint, #De 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 #Mt 4:15; as it appears, from what is said of the *land of Zabulon and Nephtali*, 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 Clarke on "Mt 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 honour 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 **#Joh 6:17, 22**. It was in one of the synagogues of Capernaum that he delivered the following discourse: see **#Joh 6:59**.

Verse 26. **Ye seek me, not because ye saw, &c.]** 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. **Labour not for the meat]** That is, for that *only*, but *also for the bread*, &c. 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, &c.]** He who *labours* not, in the work of his salvation, is never likely to enter into the kingdom of God. Though our labour 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, **#Joh 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, **#Heb 7:26-28**; **#Eph 5:27**; **#2Pe 3:14**; and especially **#Heb 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* ת 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 **#1Pe 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 *Saviour* of a lost world.

Verse 30. **What sign]** **τι σημειον**, *What miracle*; so the word is evidently used, **#Joh 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, &c.*, **#Isa 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, παυ, is probably used here for the masculine, παρ.

**Shall come to me]** All that are *drawn* by the Father, **#Joh 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, **#Ro 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; **#Ac 7:51**. And though Christ *would* have gathered them together, as a hen would her chickens under her wings, *yet they would not*. See **Clarke's note on "Mt 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, **#Ps 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-ου μη εκβαλω εξω, *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, **#Joh 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 tenueras, perseverares, si velles.* De 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 Saviour 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 Saviour. 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*, &c.

Verse 45. **It is written in the prophets]** #Isa 54:13; #Jer 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, **#Joh 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, &c.]** 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, &c.]** 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 **#Joh 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, #Mt 8:11; 26:29; #Lu 14:15; 22:30; and #Re 2:17. Those who were made partakers of the Holy Spirit are said by St. Paul, #1Co 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. 3. 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 #1Co 11:30.

Verse 55. **My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.]** Or, rather, *My flesh is the true meat*, &c. 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*, #Joh 15:1, in exactly the same sense in which he calls himself the *true bread*, #Joh 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: #2Pe 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 #Joh 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 saving 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, #2Co 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, Æthiopic, Gothic, Slavonic, Vulgate, all the Itala; Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Basil, Cyril, Chrysostom, Tertullian, Ambrosias, Augustin, Gaudentius, and Vigilus 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: #Joh 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]** #Joh 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 alway?]** Or, *Do YE also desire, &c.* 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 offences 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 Saviour? *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*, *ἐγνώκαμεν*, 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 ἅγιος του Θεου, *the holy one of God*; and this reading *Griesbach* has received into the text, leaving out του ζωντος, *the living*. χριστος, and ἅγιος convey nearly the same meaning; but the Æthiopic, 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 παραδιδουαι, *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 labourers 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 labour; no return of my prayers and tears." Take *courage*, man; *tug on*; thou shalt not labour 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 necessities, 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER VII.

*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. VII.

Verse 1. **After these things**] St. John passes from the preceding discourse of our Lord, which he delivered a little before the *passover*, #Joh 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, οὐ γὰρ εἶχεν ἐξουσίαν, *he had not authority, or liberty to walk, &c.* 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, &c., 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, #Re 7:9, 10, where he represents the saints standing before the throne, *with palm branches in their hands*, singing, *Salvation to God, &c.* On the seventh day of the feast, they went seven times round the altar, and this was called *Hosanna rabba*, the *great Hosanna*. See Clarke's notes on "Mt 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, Isa. 12, especially **#Isa 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. See Clarke "**Joh 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 **#Le 23:39, 40**, &c., and the notes there; and **#Nu 29:16**. &c.

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 **#Ge 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: **#Joh 2:23**.

Verse 4. **No man that doeth any thing in secret, &c.]** 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 honour 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 acceptance in which ὁ κόσμος frequently occurs in this Gospel. See on John 17. {**#Joh 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 **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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 favour, 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, &c., 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 candour 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, (**#Isa 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, &c.]** 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 neighbour 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, &c.]** 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 **αδικία** should be translated here; and it is frequently used by the Septuagint for **שקר** *sheker*, a lie, falsehood, &c.

See in #Ps 52:3; 119:29, 69, 104, 163; 144:8. This is its meaning in #Ro 2:8; where *ἀδικία*, *falsehood*, is put in opposition to *ἀληθεια*, *truth*.

Verse 19. **Did not Moses give you the law**, &c.] 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, #Joh 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 *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*, *the Jews*, be received instead of *ο ὄχλος*, *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 Clarke's note on "Joh 7:26".

Verse 21. **I have done one work**] That of curing the impotent man, already referred to. See #Joh 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 *Ælian*. 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: #Ge 17:9, 10, &c.

**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, **#Le 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 Saviour 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 endeavour 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, &c., against him.

Our Lord addresses himself in this discourse principally to his enemies. The strange Jews were those who were *astonished* when Christ said, **#Joh 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, &c., 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 **#Joh 7:42**. But, from Isaiah **#Isa 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: **#Joh 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 **ἐμὶ**, *I am*, some editions, the Syriac Hieros. read **ἐμὶ**, *I came*, according to the Attics. *Nonnus* confirms this reading by paraphrasing the word by **ἐληλυθα**, *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 **ἐμὶ**, *I came*, seems too refined.

Verse 31. **Will he do more miracles**] It was the belief of the Jews, and they founded it upon **#Isa 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, &c., 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 BDEGHLMS, 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, *ἐγώ*, *I am*, is read by several *ἐγώ*, *I came*, as in the twenty-ninth verse; and in these two last places the *Æthiopic*, *Arabic*, three copies of the *Itala*, *Nonnus*, and *Theophylact*, agree. See Clarke's note on "**Joh 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 **#Joh 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, &c., &c.* The Scriptures abound in this metaphor. **#Ps 36:8, 9; #Isa 44:3, 4; #Joe 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, **#Joe 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, **#Joh 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, **#De 18:15**, which they improperly distinguished from the *Messiah*, **#Joh 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. **Shall 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, #1Sa 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,

**#Joh 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!* **#Ps 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, &c., 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 ὄχλος, *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 **Clarke on "Joh 3:1"**.

Verse 51. **Doth our law judge any man]** τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, *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, **#De 17:8**, &c.; **#De 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 **#2Ki 14:25**, compared with **#Jos 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, &c.]** 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.

### **#Joh 7:53; 8:1-11.**

From the Codex Bezae.

**#Joh 7:53.** And every one went to his own house.

**#Joh 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,

From *other* MSS.

53. And every one went away to his own people. (τα ιδία 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. 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 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 up 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 of 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 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.

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: 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 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 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 VIII.

*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. VIII.

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 **#Nu 5:14**, &c.; and see at the end of chap. 18. **See Clarke "Joh 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*. **#Le 20:10**; **#De 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 *betroted*, but not married, she was to be *stoned*: **#De 22:23**. But if she was the daughter of a priest, she was to be *burned alive*: **#Le 16:9**. It appears, from **#Eze 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, **#De 22:23**. *If a damsel that is a virgin be betroted 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 neighbours 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 favoured 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]** *ἀναμαρτητος*, meaning the same kind of sin, adultery, fornication, &c. 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*, *ἐπ' αὐτη*. 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, **#Mt 21:44**. However, this procedure does not appear to have been always attended to. See **#Le 24:16**, and ver. 59 of this chapter. {**#Joh 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 honourable 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 **#Joh 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 **#Joh 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 favour 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 favour 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 **#Joh 7:52** and **#Joh 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. {**#Joh 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, **#Mal 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 **#Joh 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 **#Pr 6:23**: *For the commandment is a LAMP (or CANDLE) and the law is life*: or to **#Ps 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 **#Isa 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 **#Ge 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, &c.]** 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 **#Mr 12:41**, &c.

**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 **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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, &c., *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 Saviour 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 you, 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*, &c. 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: **#Heb 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. #Ps 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 savour of death unto death to the *obstinate* Pharisees, became the savour 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 #Ro 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 #Joh 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*, &c., *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, #Ge 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: #Ga 4:21-31; #Ro 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 endeavour 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 Saviour'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, **#Joh 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 *ἑώρακατε*, *ye have seen*, I think we should read *ἤκουσατε*, *ye have heard*, on the authority of BCKL, *fifteen* others; *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *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, **#Joh 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 Clarke on "*Joh 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, &c. 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, *ὥς καὶ ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ*, 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 *πατήρ αὐτοῦ* 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, KYPKE 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 Clarke's note on "Ge 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 #Joh 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 honour 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 *Yehovah*; and by this they simply mean God himself.

**And he saw it]** Not only in the first promise, **#Ge 3:15**, for the other patriarchs saw this as well as he; and not only in that promise which was made particularly to himself, **#Ge 12:7; 22:18**, (compared with **#Ga 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*, **#Ge 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 Saviour. 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, &c.]** 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. **#Le 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, (**#Joh 8:30, 31,**) and who, we may suppose, favoured 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, **#Lu 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 endeavoured 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*, **#Joh 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*, **#Joh 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*, is the face of persecution and death, *to declare the truth*. The *meek man* generally leaves the sinner *unreproved*: 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER IX.

*Account of the man who was born blind, 1-5. Christ heals him, 6, 7. The man is questioned by his neighbours, 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. IX.

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*, και παρὰ γων, &c. Having left the temple, where the Jews were going to stone him, (**#Joh 8:59**), it is probable our Lord went, according to his custom, to the mount of Olives. The next day, which was the Sabbath, **#Joh 9:14**, he met a man who had been born blind, sitting in some public place, and asking alms from those who passed by, **#Joh 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 AKBERRY*, 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, *De Plant. Næ-De Gigantibus-De Confus. Ling.-De Somniis*, &c.; 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 neighbours-*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 **#Joh 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 *Siloe*, 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 **#Jos 15:7; 18:16**; in **#2Sa 17:17**; and in **#1Ki 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 שָׁלַח *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 **#Ge 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 שִׁלּוֹחַ *shiloach*-the lower, שֶׁלַח *shelach*; the one signifying ἀπεσταλμενος, *sent*, the latter, κωδιων *fleece*s; 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 **#Isa 7:23; 22:9**.

Verse 8. **That he was blind**] ὅτι τυφλός 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*, *Æthiopic*, *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: כֵּן בִּי יְיָ *Deserve something by me*-Give me something that God may

reward you. רַכִּי נִי זָכִי גֵר מִךְ *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: סִכִּי כִי מָה הָיִיגָא אֶסְתַּכֵּל בִּי מָה אָגָא *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, &c.]** 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.]** σχίσμα, *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, #Joh 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, #Isa 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 neighbourhood, but nearly the whole city: for it appears the man got his bread by *publicly begging*, #Joh 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 ἐχει, 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 #Jos 7:19; #1Sa 6:5, and #Lu 17:18. But, while they solemnly put him to his oath, they endeavoured 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, **#Joh 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]** *λοιδορησαν*. Eustathius derives *λοιδορια* from *λογος*, a word, and *δου*, a spear:-they spoke *cutting, piercing* words. Solomon talks of some who *spoke like the piercings of a sword*, **#Pr 12:18**. And the psalmist speaks of *words that are like drawn swords*, **#Ps 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 **#Lu 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 favourites?

**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, &c.]** 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 have 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 **#Joh 1:34, 49; 10:36; #Mt 16:16; #Mr 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 Saviour. 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, {#Joh 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*, #Joh 1:29; #Ps 32:5. And this is the proper import of the phrase, αφεσις των αμαρτιων, 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 æra, 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER X.

*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. X.

Verse 1. **Verily, verily, &c.]** From **#Joh 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 **#Joh 10:22**.

Christ, says Calmet, having declared himself to be the *light of the world*, which should blind some while it illuminated others, **#Joh 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 wilfully *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 practise them may render them incredible. *Quesnel*.

**He that entereth not by the door]** Christ assures us, **#Joh 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, &c. 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 labour 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 #Col 4:3; #2Co 2:12; #1Co 16:9; #Re 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 fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of peace. He who does not endeavour to realize in his own soul the truths which he preaches to others will soon be as salt without its savour; 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, **#Ac 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, πρὸ ἐμοῦ, *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 *labours*, 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, &c.]** 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, **#Eze 34:2, &c.** *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, &c.* How can worldly-minded, hireling, fox-hunting, and card-playing priests read these words of the Lord, without trembling to the centre of their souls! Wo to those parents who bring up their children merely for Church honours 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 περισσόν 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 #Joh 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, {#Joh 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 labour, 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', ὡς' αιπολῖα πλατὲ' αιγῶν αιπολοὶ ἀνδρες  
'ρεῖα διακρινέωσιν, ἐπεὶ κε νομῶ μιγέωσιν.  
Iliad. 2. 474.

"As goat-herds separate their numerous flocks  
With ease, though fed promiscuous."

**And am known of mine.]** They *know* me as their father, protector, and Saviour; 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. {#Joh 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*, #Heb 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, #Eph 2:13-17.

The original word, *αὐλή*, 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 #Joh 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 #Joh 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*, *ἐξουσίαν*. Our Lord speaks of himself here as *man*, or the *Messiah*, as being God's messenger, and sent upon earth to fulfil 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]** *σχίσμα*, *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 **#Joh 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 neighbouring 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, &c. As *Judas Maccabæus* not only restored the temple service, and cleansed it from pollution, &c., but also *repaired* the ruins of it, the feast was called *τα εγκαίνια*, the *renovation*.

**It was winter.]** *χειμῶν 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, **#Joh 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, **#Lu 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*, **#Joh 2:13**; *next* to the feast of *pentecost*, as it seems to have been, **#Joh 5:1**; *then* to the feast of *tabernacles*, **#Joh 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 **Clarke's note on "Joh 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 αλρεις*, literally, *How long wilt thou take away our life?* Mr. Markland would read *αλωρεις* for *αλρεις*, 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, &c.**] 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, **#Mt 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 Saviour* 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, #1Jo 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, &c., 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 **#Joh 17:11, 22**.

Verse 31. **The Jews took up stones]** To stone him as a blasphemer, **#Le 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 **#Joh 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?* #Ps 4:6; i.e. who shall *give* us good things. *SHOW us thy mercy*, #Ps 85:7; i.e. *give* us to *feel* the effects of thy mercy. *Thou hast SHOWED thy people hard things*, #Ps 60:3; i.e. thou hast *treated* them with *rigour*. *Thou hast SHOWED me great and sore troubles*, #Ps 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, &c.; 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, #Joh 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 #Ps 82:6, which shows that, under the word *law*, our Lord comprised the Jewish *sacred writings* in general. See also #Joh 12:34; 15:25.

**Ye are gods?**] That is, *judges*, who are called אֱלֹהִים *elohim*. That judges are here meant appears from #Ps 82:2, &c., and also from what follows here. And this is probably the only place where the word אֱלֹהִים is applied to any but the true God. See Parkhurst under the root אֱלֹהִים.

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 #2Ch 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-λογου της κρισεως*, in the words or matters of judgment,-SEPT., which is nearly according to the Hebrew to בְּדַבַּר מִשְׁפָּט *bedebar mishpat*, in the word or matter of judgment. In #De 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 #Heb 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, #Lu 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*, &c., it means, God gave an *order*, *commission*, &c., 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**, &c.] 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 endeavoured 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 Clarke's note on "Joh 6:22"**, and see Clarke "**Mt 19:1**".

**Where John at first baptized]** That is, at *Bethabara*: see **#Joh 1:28**. *Afterwards*, John baptized at *Aenon*: **#Joh 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 endeavoured 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 XI.

*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. XI.

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 **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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, {**#Joh 11:54, 55**}, and from **#Joh 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 event 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 **#Mt 26:7**, &c., but particularly at the end of that chapter. **See Clarke "Mt 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 **#Lu 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 **#Joh 12:1**, &c., 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*, not *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 **#Joh 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 favourable opportunity of proving to them *how much* he loved them. Christ never denies a *less* favour, 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, **#Joh 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 **Clarke's note on "Joh 1:39"**.

Our Lord alludes to the case of a traveller, 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, **#Joh 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 travelled 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 **#Lu 22:53**.

**If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not**] A traveller 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*, **#Joh 11:10**; i.e. there is no *sun* above the horizon. The words ἐν αὐτῷ, **#Joh 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 fulfil 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*, &c., 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*, &c. Though the word sleep frequently meant death, (see **#Ac 7:60**; **#1Co 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 favourable 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 favourable prognostic: hence that saying of Menander:-

Ὕπνος δὲ πάσης ἐστὶν ὑγίεια νοσίου.

*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 **#Joh 11:39**.

Verse 16. **Thomas, which is called Didymus]** *Thomas*, or תאום *Thaom*, 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 **#Ge 25:24**, *Esau* and *Jacob* are called תאומים *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 favourable 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 **#Joh 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 **Clarke on "Joh 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 **#Lu 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 **#Ezr 9:3, 4; #Ne 1:4; #Ps 137:1; #Isa 47:1; #Lu 1:79; and #Mt 27:61**.

Verse 21. **If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.]** Mary said the same words to him a little after, **#Joh 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 favour 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 Saviour, *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 Saviour was, when Martha met him, was not far from the place where Lazarus was buried. **See Clarke's note on "Lu 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 neighbours, 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, &c.]** 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 (**#Lu 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, &c.**] 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, &c.**] 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, **#Joh 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 *οἶω* 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, [A.S.], 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.**] *τεταρταλιος γαρ εστι*, *This is the fourth day*, i.e. since his interment. Christ himself was buried on the same day on which he was crucified, see **#Joh 19:42**, and it is likely that Lazarus was buried also on the same day on which he died. **See Clarke on "Joh 11:17"**.

Verse 40. **If thou wouldest believe**, &c.] So it appears that it is *faith* alone that interests the miraculous and saving power of God in behalf of men. Instead of *δοξαν*, *the glory*, one MS. reads *δυναμιν*, *the miraculous power*.

Verse 41. **Where the dead was laid.**] These words are wanting in BC\*DL, *three* others; *Syriac*, *Persic*, *Arabic*, *Sahidic*, *Æthiopic*, *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 **#Joh 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-κερπαις*, from *κερπω*, *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!* #Ec 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,* #Pr 11:25. Therefore, let no man withhold good, while it is in the power of his hand to do it. #Pr 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 Saviour! 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 #Joh 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 #Ac 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 #Mt 22:7; and the notes on chap. 24.

Verse 49. **Caiaphas being the high priest that same year]** By the law of Moses, #Ex 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 Clarke on "Lu 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 æqualis, forsitan præferenda receptæ*.

**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*: #Ro 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 dabitar 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. *Æn.* v. l. 815, &c.

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, &c.]** These, and the preceding words in **#Joh 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, **#1Jo 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*, **#Joh 7:35**, and **#Jas 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 **#De 32:5**; **#Isa 43:6**; **45:11**; **#Jer 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: **#Ro 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. {**#1Jo 2:2**} All the truths of the Gospel were not revealed at *once*, even to the apostles themselves.

Verse 53. **They took counsel together]** *συμβουλευσαντο*, 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]** *παρησια*, 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 *Sapfurim*.

**A city chilled Ephraim]** Various written in the MSS., *Ephraim*, *Ephrem*, *Ephram*, and *Ephratha*. This was a little village, situated in the neighbourhood of *Bethel*; for the scripture, **#2Ch 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, **#Jos 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 neighbourhood 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 **#2Ch 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, &c., 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 **#Joh 11:48-53**.

CHRIST'S sympathy and tenderness, one of the principal subjects in this chapter, have already been particularly noted on **#Joh 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 splendour 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, cœlique Deis Erebiq̃ue liberet,  
Hoc caput in cunctas damnatum exponere pœnas!  
Devotum hostiles Decium pressere catervæ:  
Me geminæ figant acies, me barbara telis  
Rheni turba petat: cunctis ego pervius hastis  
Excipiam medius totius vulnera belli.  
*Hic redimat sanguis populos: hac cæde 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XII.

*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. XII.

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: **#Joh 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 Clarke's note on "**Mt 26:7**"; see also Clarke "**Mr 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 Mt. 26, see Clarke "**Mt 26:75**". to which I beg leave to refer the reader.

Verse 5. **Three hundred pence]** Or *denarii*: about 9£. 13s. 9d. of our money; reckoning the denarius at 7 3/4d. 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 βασταζεν; and in this sense it is used, **#Joh 20:15**: *If thou hast STOLEN him away*-εἰ σὺ βастασας αὐτον. 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 βастασαι, *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, βастασασα δε τουμον εκ των γονατων προς αутην 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, &c.* 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:-αφες 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, Æthiopic, 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: #Lu 24:1. See the notes on #Mt 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 *Clarke* on "Mt 21:1", &c., and #Mr 11:1-6, where this transaction is largely explained.

Verse 16. **Then remembered they, &c.**] 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 **#Joh 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 *Phœnicia* 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 *honour* 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, &c.]** 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*, &c. 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 Clarke on "Mt 10:39"; and see Clarke "Lu 14:26". I am about to give up my life for the salvation of men; but I shall speedily receive it back with everlasting honour, 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 honour.

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 *honoured 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 honour 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]** καὶ τί εἶπω; πατέρ, σῶσον με ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης 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 τί *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, &c., 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, &c.]** 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. **#2Co 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 **#Ex 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 **#Re 6:1**, the voice of one of the living creatures is compared to *thunder*; and in **#Re 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 **שר 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 #Joh 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*, #Ge 49:10. And probably our Lord refers to the prophecy, #Isa 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 *colours* 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, [A.S.], *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.

Εἰδ' ἀγε πειρησασθε θεοὶ, ἵνα εἰδῆτε πάντες,  
Σειρὴν χρυσεῖην ἐξ οὐρανοθεν κρεμασάντες·  
Πάντες δ' ἐξαπτεσθε θεοὶ, πασαι τε θαιναι. 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*, #Ac 17:28, and *Epimenides*, #Tit 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!* #Ps 65:2.

Verse 34. **We have heard out of the law]** That is, out of the sacred writings. The words here are quoted from #Ps 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 Clarke on "*Joh 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 #Isa 53:1, &c.; #Da 9:24, 27. But as there were several passages that spoke of the *perpetuity* of his reign, as #Isa 9:7; #Eze 37:25; #Da 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, **#Lu 17:22**. Then shall ye seek me, but shall not find me, **#Joh 7:34**. For the kingdom of God shall be taken from *you*, and given to the *Gentiles*, **#Mt 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 **#Joh 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 endeavoured 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 *ὅτι* (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 fulfilment 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 **#Isa 53:1**, &c.

**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 favour 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 quærat, cito respondeo; Quia NOLEBANT: MALAM quippe eorum VOLUNTATEM prævidit Deus, et per prophetam prænunciavit.* "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 **#Isa 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]** **#Isa 6:1**, &c. *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  $\theta\epsilon\upsilon$ , and  $\tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ , *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 **#Joh 9:22**.

Verse 43. **They loved the praise of men]** *δοξαν*, the *glory* or *honour* 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. {**#Joh 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 honours the Son honours 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, **#Joh 1:5**. Before the coming of this Saviour, 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 **#Joh 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5**.

Verse 47. **And believe not]** *και μη φυλαξη*, *And keep them not*, is the reading of ABL, *seven* others; *Syriac*, *Whelock's Persian*, two of the *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Æthiopic*, *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 **#Joh 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, **#Mt 25:35**, &c.

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, *ἐντολή*. 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, **#1Jo 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. {**#Joh 12:24, 32, 39**}



## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XIII.

*Christ washes the feet of his disciples, and gives them instructions concerting 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. XIII.

Verse 1. **Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew, &c.]** Or, as some translate, *Now Jesus having known, before the feast of the passover, that his hour was come, &c.* The supper mentioned in **#Joh 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 **#Mt 26:2**; **#Joh 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 **#Joh 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 **#Joh 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 (**#Joh 13:5**) was usually practised by the Jews *before* they entered upon their meals, as may be gathered from **#Lu 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 **#Mt 26:14**, &c.; **#Mr 14:10, 11**; and **#Lu 22:3**, &c. 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, **#Mt 26:26**, &c., Mark, **#Mr 14:22**, &c.,

and Luke, #Lu 22:19, &c., 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 #Mt 26:14. *Calmet*.

Verse 3. **Knowing that the Father had given, &c.]** 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 honours 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 Clarke on "Joh 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, &c.]** 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, #1Sa 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, #Ac 1:1; and in the Septuagint, #Ge 2:3. There is every reason to believe that he washed the feet of all the twelve. See Clarke on "Joh 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, &c.]** 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.]** μετὰ ταῦτα, after this business is finished. And so we find he explained the whole to them, as soon as he had finished the washing: see **#Joh 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, **#1Jo 1:7**; and by his Spirit, **#1Co 6:11**; **#Tit 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, &c.*, 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, **#Joh 12:24**.

Verse 9. **Lord, not my feet only, &c.]** 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, **#Joh 13:7**, that he should *afterwards* know what was the intent and meaning of this washing; and now he begins to fulfil 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 διδάσκαλος 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 וּמֹרֵי *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 honour 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]** ουδε 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, &c.]** 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, **#Ps 41:9**, who was one of the most express emblems of this traitor. See on **#Joh 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, **#Mt 10:40**, &c. 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 Clarke's note on "**Joh 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 **#Mt 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]** ἐπ' αὐτὸν, 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 **#Joh 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 Mt. 26, where the subject is considered at large. **See Clarke "Mt 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*, εὐθὺς, *immediately*; "he did, not only in the miracles wrought at his death, but also in that remarkable case mentioned, **#Joh 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*. τέκνλα, 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 neighbour as thyself*, was a positive precept of the law, **#Le 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 neighbour *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, &c.**] 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, inquit, 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 defence of my truth. See **#Joh 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, &c.] See Clarke on "Mt 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, &c. 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 Peter's 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, &c., 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 fulfil. 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*.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XIV.

*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. XIV.

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 Saviour 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, **#Joh 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, &c.]** 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, **#1Ki 6:5; #Ezr 8:29; #Jer 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 **#Nu 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*, **#Joh 6:68**. 2. By his *example*, **#1Pe 2:21**. 3. By his *sacrifice*, **#Heb 9:8, 9**. 4. By his *Spirit*, **#Joh 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, **#2Co 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, **#Joh 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, **#Ex 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, **#Ac 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, **#Ac 19:12**. 3. By the *word* of Peter, Ananias and Sapphira were *struck dead*, **#Ac 5:5, 9, 10**. 4. Elymas the sorcerer was *struck blind* by the *word* of Paul, **#Ac 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, #1Jo 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, #Joh 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, #1Jo 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.

**But 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 *Æthiopic*, *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, #Joh 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 צַרַּף *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*, #Joh 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 Clarke on "Joh 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, #Joh 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 Saviour, 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, &c.]** 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, **#1Co 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 **#Mt 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 fulness of God: on your *own account*, therefore, ye should have rejoiced and not mourned.

**My Father is greater than I.]** In **#Joh 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*, **#Joh 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 πειμψας, 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*, **#Joh 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 **#Joh 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 **#Joh 14:18**; **#Joh 16:16**; **17:2**; **#Mt 28:18**; **#Php 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 **#Joh 18:38**; **19:4, 12**; see also **#Lu 23:4**, &c., and **#Mt 27:24**.

3. But the most general opinion is that *Satan* is meant, who is called the *prince of the power of the air*, **#Eph 2:2**; and who is supposed to be the same that is called *the god of this world*, **#2Co 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, #Mt 26:30; #Mr 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XV.

*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. XV.

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 ἀρᾶν αὐτοῦ, *taketh it away*; but the branch that beareth fruit, καθαίρει αὐτοῦ, *he taketh away FROM it*, i.e. he prunes away excrescences, and removes every thing that might hinder its increasing fruitfulness. The verb καθαίρω; from κατὰ, *intens.* and αἴρω, *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 ungues.*

"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, #Joh 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 #Joh 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, &c.]** "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, &c*.

Verse 8. **Herein is my Father glorified]** Or, *honoured*. It is the honour of the husbandman to have good, strong, vigorous vines, plentifully laden with fruit: so it is the honour 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, &c.]** 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 fulness. It was to drive wretchedness out of the world that Jesus came into it.



Bishop Pearce, by joining *ἐν ἡμῖν* to *χαρά*, and not to *μείνη*, 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 Clarke on "**Joh 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 præceptum 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 dishonourably 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, *καὶ υπερφίλων τὴν γυναῖκα*, and loved his wife exceedingly.) He answered, I will indeed, O Cyrus, *καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς πριαίμην*, ransom her even with MY LIFE, that she may be no longer in thralldom. See XENOPH. *Cyrop.* lib. iii. c. 2.

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 *Æneis*. 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-Cælum hoc, et conscia sidera testor!*  
TANTUM *infelicem* NIMIUM DILEXIT AMICUM.  
*ÆN.* lib. ix. l. 427, &c.



"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, **#Joh 13:16; #Mt 10:24, 25; #Lu 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 **ἐθηκα**, I have PUT or *placed* you, i.e. in the vine.

*Theodorus Mopsuensis*, as quoted by Wetstein, observes that **ἐθηκα** is here used for **ἐφυτεύσα**; (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 *labour*. 4. He must not wait till work be brought to him, but he must *go* and seek it. 5. He must labour 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 labour, 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 labours 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, &c.* 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, &c.]** 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. *παράτηρειν* 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 fights 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 *Clarke's note on "Joh 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 Clarke on "**Joh 10:34**". These words are taken from **#Ps 69:4**. This psalm is applied to Christ, **#Joh 2:17; 19:28**; to the vengeance of God against Judea, **#Ac 1:20**. The psalm seems entirely prophetic of Christ. His deep *abasement* is referred to, **#Ps 69:2-5**; his *prayer* for his *disciples* and *followers*, **#Ps 69:6**; that for himself, in the *garden* of *Gethsemane*, **#Ps 69:15-19**; his *crucifixion*, **#Ps 69:20-22**; the *vengeance* of God against the *Jews*, from **#Ps 69:23-29**; the glorious manner in which he *gets out* of all his *sufferings*, **#Ps 69:30**; the *abolition* of the *Mosaic rites* and *ceremonies*, **#Ps 69:31**, compared with **#Isa 66:3**; and, finally, the *establishment* of the *Gospel* through the whole world, in **#Ps 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 Clarke on "**Joh 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, **#Joh 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 labour 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XVI.

*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. XVI.

Verse 1. **These things have I spoken]** Particularly what is mentioned in the two last chapters.

**Be offended.]** *να μη 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 Clarke on "Joh 9:22"**. In these excommunications they were spoiled of all their substance, see **#Ezr 10:8**, and see also **#Heb 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, &c.]** 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*, **#Ac 23:12, 13**; and agreeably to this, it is said, in that Tract of the *Talmud* which is entitled *Bammidbar*, R. xxi. ad. *Num.* xxv. 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 Clarke on "Joh 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 **#Joh 13:3**, Peter had asked, *Lord, thither goest thou?*-and Thomas much the same in **#Joh 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: **#Joh 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 **#Mt 20:19; 26:2; #Mr 9:31; 10:33, #Lu 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**] *ἐλεγξει*, 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 **#Ac 2:1**, &c.

**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 **#Isa 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 **#Ac 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 αμαρτίας*, 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 **#Joh 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 **#Joh 12:31**; **#Col 2:15**; **#Re 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: **#Ac 17:31**. And we find that while Peter was asserting this doctrine at Cæsarea, **#Ac 10:42**, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews and the Gentiles which were present, **#Ac 10:44**, &c., 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: **#Ro 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 honour 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: **#Ps 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, **#Ac 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 Saviour*, 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. #Ac 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, #Joh 16:16, that had so exceedingly embarrassed them, as appears by #Joh 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 favour, unction of the Holy Spirit, purification of heart, &c., &c., and all these to be enjoyed *in Christ*.

**In the world ye shall have tribulation]** Or, as most of the very best MSS. read, ἐχετε, 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XVII.

*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. XVII.

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, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 13:4.** He laid aside his garments, girded himself with a towel, &c. There is no room to doubt that he and his disciples had been at the *bath* before: see **#Joh 13:10.**

2. The high priest addressed a solemn *prayer* to God: 1. For *himself* this Christ imitates, **#Joh 17:1-5.** 2. For the *sons of Aaron*: our Lord imitates this in praying for his *disciples*, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 17:20-24.** After which he returns again to his disciples, **#Joh 17:25, 26.** See CALMET'S Dict. under *Expiation*; and see La Grande Bible de M. MARTIN, *in loc.*

I. Our Lord's prayer for himself, **#Joh 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 Saviour 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 honourable, 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, **#Heb 2:9**. And this was according to the promise of the *universal inheritance* made to Christ, **#Ps 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 **#2Co 5:14, 15**; **#Ro 5:21**; **#1Ti 2:4, 6**.

**That he should have eternal life, &c.]** 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 3. that it is *never to end*, hence called αἰωνιος ζωη, a *life ever living*; from αἰ, *always*, and ων, *being* or *existence*. And indeed no words can more forcibly convey the idea of *eternity* than these. It is called η αἰωνιος ζωη, *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 Saviour, 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 **#1Jo 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 **#Joh 17:24**; **#Ps 90:2**; **#Eph 1:4**. See **#Joh 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, **#Php 2:6, 9**.

II. Our Lord's prayer for his disciples, **#Joh 17:6, 19**.

Verse 6. **I have manifested thy name**] *ἐφανερώσα*, 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, **#Joh 17:7, 8**.



Verse 9. **I pray not for the world]** I am not yet come to that part of my intercession: see **#Joh 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 **Clarke on "Joh 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, **#Joh 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 δέδωκας μοι, THOSE whom thou hast given me, ABCEHLMS, Mt. BHV, and nearly one hundred others, read ω, which refers to the τῷ ὀνοματί 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, &c.* 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, &c. This reading is supported by the most ample evidence and indisputable authority. Griesbach has admitted it into the text, and Professor White in his χρισέως 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. Ser. 125; n. 5; Ps. cxlvi. n. 20; Ser. 352, n. 8; and in Ps. 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. **See Clarke "Ac 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 *Saviour* 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 #Ps 41:9; 109:8; compared with #Ac 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 Clarke on "Joh 15:11".

Verse 14. **I have given them thy word]** Or, *thy doctrine*-του λόγον σου. In this sense the word λογος is often used by St. John.

**And the world hath hated them]** The Jewish rulers, &c., 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 endeavour 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, labour 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, #Joh 13:27, and who would endeavour 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]** 'αγιασον, from α, *negative*, and γη, *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 Clarke on "Joh 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 **#Heb 9:11-13**. The word, *αγιαζω*, to *consecrate* or *sanctify*, is used in the sense of *devoting* to death, in **#Jer 12:3**, both in the *Hebrew* and in the *Septuagint*: the Hebrew קדש 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 Clarke on "Joh 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*: **#Ac 4:32**. 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*, #Joh 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, #Heb 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, #Joh 3:3; #Mt 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 #Joh 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 Saviour* for ever.

Verse 26. **I have declared unto them thy name, &c.]** 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 #Joh 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 XVIII.

*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 clamour for his condemnation, 39. 40.*

NOTES ON CHAP. XVIII.

Verse 1. **Over the brook Cedron]** Having finished the prayer related in the preceding chapter, our Lord went straight to the garden of Gethsemane, #Mt 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: #2Sa 15:23; #1Ki 15:13; #2Ki 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 #2Sa 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 Clarke on "Mt 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 #Mt 26:36-47. See also #Mr 14:30-36, and #Lu 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 #Lu 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 **#Mt 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 **#Mt 26:55**; **#Mr 14:48**; **#Lu 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, &c.]** 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, &c., to give them, that they might know whom they were to seize: see **#Mt 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 **#Mt 26:37**; **#Mr 13:33**.



Verse 10. **Having a sword]** See Clarke's note on "Lu 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 #Mt 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 Clarke's note on "Lu 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 as because of this that he is called high priest. But see the notes on #Mt 2:4, and #Lu 3:2.

**That same year.]** The office was now no longer *during life* as formerly. See Clarke's note on "Joh 11:49".

What is related in the 24th verse, {#Joh 18:24}, *Now Annas had sent him bound to Caiaphas*, comes properly in after the 13th verse. {#Joh 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, &c.]** Therefore he was an improper person to sit in judgment on Christ, whom he had *prejudged* and *precondemned*: see on #Joh 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 #Joh 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20, except in #Joh 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]** *Cæzarius*, 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 **#2Sa 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*:-

Ὅτι τὴν θύραν ἀνεῳξεν ἡ 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 **Clarke's notes on "Mt 26:69"**.

Verse 18. **Servants and officers]** These belonged to the chief priests, &c.; 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 **#Ac 8:33**.

Verse 20. **I spake openly to the world]** To every person in the land indiscriminately-to the people at large: the *τω κοσμῳ*, 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, &c.]** 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, #**Joh 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, #**Lu 22:58**. Having once denied his Master, he naturally retired from the place where his accuser was to the vestibule of the hall, #**Mt 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, **#Lu 22:59**, one in particular strongly affirmed; and which, according to John, **#Joh 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, **#Lu 22:61** proves that Jesus was in the same room with Peter. We must farther observe that Matthew, **#Mt 26:57**, lays the scene of Peter's denials in the house of Caiaphas: whereas John, **#Joh 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 **#Joh 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*, **#Mr 13:35**. Concerning the nature and progress of Peter's denial, see the notes on **#Mt 26:58, 69-75**.

Verse 28. **The hall of judgment]** *εις το πραιτωριος*, *To the prætorium*. This was the house where Pilate lodged; hence called in our margin, *Pilate's house*. The prætorium is so called from being the dwelling-place of the *prætor*, 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 prætorium, for fear of contracting some impurity, which would have obliged them to separate themselves from all religious ordinances till the evening, **#Le 15:10, 11, 19, 20**.

**That they might eat the passover.]** Some maintain that *το πασχα* 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; *εικοσι πεντε μυριαδας ηριθησαν, προς δε εξακισχιλια 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 **#Mt 26:17-19**; **#Mr 14:12-18**; **#Lu 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 Clarke's note on "Mt 26:20"**, and at the conclusion of the chapter, where the subject, and the different opinions on it, are largely considered. **See Clarke "Mt 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 **#Ac 12:1**, &c., 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*, **#Joh 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 Cæsar's friend, **#Joh 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. **See Clarke "Joh 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, &c., with the cross, Christ might be crucified, according to his own prediction: **#Joh 12:32; 3:14**.

Verse 33. **Art thou the king of the Jews?**] St. Luke says, expressly, #**Lu 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 Cæsar. 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. **Am 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 Cæsar, 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 as 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 labour, and made nothing out: see the notes on #**Mt 27:15**; #**Lu 23:17**.

Verse 40. **Barabbas was a robber**] See #**Mt 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 **#Lu 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 cælum!* was no motto of his. For fear of the clamours 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 **#Joh 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 **#Joh 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, #De 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 Mezhiah, 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. Sotah, 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, &c.*, fol. 8, 2. So in the case of adultery, which we also observed in our notes on **#Joh 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, &c. 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 colour and pretext of truth; and it succeeded according to what they desired. Divine Providence so ordering it as the evangelist intimates, **#Joh 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*, **#Re 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."

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XIX.

*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 clamour 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. XIX.

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, **#De 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 **#Mt 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 **#Lu 23:16**.

Verse 2. **Platted a crown of thorns**] See Clarke on "**Mt 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 Cæsar, 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**] *αὐτον*, 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 #Le 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 #Mt 26:65, 66. They might refer also to the law against false prophets, #De 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 Cæsar; 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 cælum*. 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: #Joh 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 #Lu 23:4, 15, 20, 22; #Joh 19:4, 12, 13.

**Thou art not Cæsar's friend]** Thou dost not act like a person who has the interest of the emperor at heart. Ambassadors, prefects, counsellors, &c., 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 colours*, like that of Ahasuerus, **#Es 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 **#Joh 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, **#Mr 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 Γ *three*, to be mistaken for Ϛ *six*. The *Codex Bezae* has generally numeral *letters* instead of words. *Bengel* observes that he has found the letter Γ *gamma*, THREE, exceedingly like the Ϛ *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 τριτη, the *third*, is the genuine reading. **See Clarke's note on "Mr 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]** *αρον*: probably this means, *kill him*. In **#Isa 57:1**, it is said, *και ανδρες, δικαιοι αιρονται*, 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, **#Mt 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 **#Mt 27:26**, &c.; **#Mr 15:16**, &c.

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 **Clarke's note on "Mt 27:32"**.

**Golgotha]** See **Clarke on "Mt 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 **#Mt 27:35**.

Verse 19. **Pilate wrote a title]** See **Clarke on "Mt 27:37"**.

Verse 20. **Hebrew,-Greek,-Latin.]** See **Clarke on "Lu 23:38"**.

On **#Mt 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, *עֲבְרָאִיִּשְׁתִּי*  
*ישוע נצריא מלכא דיהודיא*

In Greek, *Ἑλληνιστί.*  
*ιησους ο ναζωρεος ο βασιλευς των ιουδαιων*

In Latin, *Ῥωμαιστί.*  
*iehsus nazarenus rex iudæorum*

Verse 22. **What I have written, I have written.]** That is, I will not alter what I have written. The Roman laws forbad 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, &c. 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 colour, 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 *ματιον* which we translate *cloak*, and *coat*, see **Clarke's note on "Lu 6:29"**.

Verse 24. **That the scripture might be fulfilled]** These words are found in the common printed text, in **#Mt 27:35**; but they are omitted by ABDEFGHKLSU, 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 **#Ps 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 Cleophas]** She is said, in **#Mt 27:56**, (see the note there,) and **#Mr 15:40**, to have been the mother of James the Less, and of Joses; and this James her son is said, in **#Mt 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 **#Ps 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 fulfilment 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 **#Mt 27:34**, and **#Mr 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, **#Joh 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 Clarke's note on "Mt 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 favour 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, **#De 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, **#Ex 23:17**. 3. Because that was the day on which the sheaf of the first fruits was offered, according to the command, **#Le 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. l. 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 *λογχνη*, *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 travelled 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, **#1Co 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, {**#Joh 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*, **#Ex 12:46**; **#Nu 9:12**; **#Ps 34:20**. *They shall look upon him whom they pierced*, **#Zec 12:10**; **#Ps 22:16**.

Verse 38. **Joseph of Arimathea]** See on **#Mt 27:57-60**; and particularly **#Mr 15:42, 43**.

Verse 39. **Nicodemus]** See Clarke on "Joh 3:1", &c.

**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 Clarke on "Joh 11:34".

Verse 41. **There was a garden]** It was an ancient custom for particular families to have burying places in their gardens. See #2Ki 21:18, 26.

**New sepulchre]** See Clarke on "Mt 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, &c., 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 #Isa 53:9. Every thing attending his mock trial, his passion, his death, his burial, &c., 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XX.

*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. XX.

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, **#Joh 20:1, 2**, and from **#Joh 20:11-18**. From his own actual knowledge, what he relates, **#Joh 3:3-10, 19-29**, and the whole of **#Joh 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, **#Mr 16:1; #Lu 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*: **#Mt 28:1; #Mr 16:1**.

Verse 2. **Then she runneth]** This was after the women had seen the angels, who said he was risen from the dead, **#Lu 24:4**. She told, not only Peter and John, but the other apostles also, **#Mt 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 θεωμαι, *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. #Ps 16:9, 10: *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell-* לא העזב נפשי לשאול *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, #Mt 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 dishonourable 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 #Joh 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 Clarke on "Joh 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, #Joh 20:13.

**One at the head, and the other at the feet]** So were the cherubim placed at each end of the mercy-seat: #Ex 25:18, 19. *Lightfoot.*

Verse 13. **They have taken away my Lord]** It was conjectured, on #Joh 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: **#Mt 28:5-7**; **#Mr 16:6, 7**; **#Lu 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 Saviour*.

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 αψιασθαι 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 *דבק* *dabak*, which signifies to *cleave*, *cling*, *stick*, or be *glued to*. From **#Mt 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, **#Mr 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, **#Joh 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 *barricaded*: 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 Clarke on "Joh 20:30"**.

The evangelist has omitted the appearing of our Lord to the other women who came from the tomb, **#Mt 28:9**, and that to the two disciples who were going to *Emmaus*, **#Lu 24:13**, &c., 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 **#Mt 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, **#Joh 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, **#Joh 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, &c.]** And it is very probable that Thomas did so; for his unbelief was too deeply rooted to be easily cured.

Verse 28. **Thomas answered, &c.]** 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 Œcumenic 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, &c. 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 #**Joh 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 honour 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, &c.]** 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, &c.]** That is, besides the two mentioned here. **#Joh 20:19, 26**, viz. Christ's entering into the house in a miraculous manner *twice*, notwithstanding *the doors were fast shut*: see on **#Joh 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; **{#Joh 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.

## ST. JOHN

### CHAPTER XXI.

*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. XXI.

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*: #Mt 28:7; #Mr 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, #Mt 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: #Lu 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 #Joh 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 #Mr 16:12; otherwise his person was so remarkable that all his disciples readily knew him when he was at hand: see #Joh 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 παῖς, 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 φάγω, *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 Clarke's note on "Joh 6:9".

Verse 6. **And ye shall find.**] The *Æthiopic*, three copies of the *Itala*, and St. Cyril, add, *They said therefore unto him, we have laboured all the night and caught nothing, nevertheless at thy command we will let down the net.* This is borrowed from #Lu 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, #Mt 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 #1Sa 19:24, when Saul had put off his ματια, *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 #2Sa 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**, &c.] 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, #Joh 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, #Joh 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: **#Lu 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, **#Joh 20:19**; again to *eleven* of them, **#Joh 20:26**; and at this time to *seven* of them, **#Joh 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, **#Mr 16:9**; **#Joh 20:15, 16**. 2ndly, To the holy women who came from the tomb. **#Mt 28:9**. 3dly, To the two disciples who went to Emmaus, **#Lu 24:13**, &c. 4thly, To St. Peter alone, **#Lu 24:34**. 5thly, To the *ten*, in the absence of Thomas, **#Joh 20:19**. 6thly, Eight days after to the *eleven*, Thomas being present; **#Joh 20:26**. 7thly, To the *seven*, mentioned in **#Joh 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, **#Mt 28:16**. If the appearance mentioned by St. Paul, **#1Co 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, **#1Co 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 **#Mr 16:19, 20**; **#Lu 24:50-53**; **#Ac 1:3-12**; **#1Co 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*, **#Mt 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 **Clarke's note on "Mt 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 **#Joh 21:15, 17**, our Lord uses the verb βοσκω, to feed, and in **#Joh 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, &c., 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, &c.; 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, **#1Jo 5:2: Feed the flock of God (ποιμανατε το ποιμνιον του θεου)** which is among you, taking the oversight (επισκοπουντες, 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 **#Joh 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 nearly 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*, &c., 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. **See Clarke "Joh 21:25"**.

**We know]** Instead of *οἶδαμεν*, *we know*, some have written *οἶδα μὲν*, *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, &c.]** *Origen's* signification of the word *χωρεῖν* 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: **#Joh 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 *χωρεῖν*. 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, &c.* 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 **#Nu 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 **#Da 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 *De Ebriet*, T. i. p. 362, 10, is observed to speak after the same manner, *ουδε γαρ των δωρεων 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 *De Posterit. Caini*, T. i. p. 253, l. 38, he says, speaking of the fulness of God, *ουδε γαρ εις (ει) πλουτον επιδεικνυσθαι βουληθειη τον εαυτου, χωρησαι αν, ηπειρωθεισης και θαλαττης, η συμπασα γη*. And should he will to draw out his fulness, 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 Æneas say to Achilles:-

Αλλ' αγε μηκετι ταυτα λεγωμεθα, νηπυτιοι ως,  
Ἐσταοτ' ἐν μεσση υσμινῃ δημοτῆτος.  
Εστι γαρ αμφοτεροισιν ονειδεα μυθησασθαι  
Πολλα μαλ' ουδ' αν νηυς εκατονζυγος αχθος αροιτο.  
Στρεπτη δε γλωσσ' εστι βροτων, πολεις δ' ενι μυθοι,  
Παντοιοι' επων δε πολυς νομος ενθα και ενθα.  
Ὅποιον 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: *Præsertim cum illi eam gloriam consecuti sunt, quæ vix cœlo capi posse videatur*-"especially when they pursued that glory which *heaven itself* seems *scarcely sufficient to contain*." And *Livy* also, in vii. 25, *Hæ vires populi Romani, quas vix terrarum capit orbis*-"these energies of the Roman people, which the *terraqeous 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 #De 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*, &c., 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*, *Æthiopic*, *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, #Nu 5:22. In #De 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 honour, 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 #Mt 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16; 8:10; 10:15, 23, 42, &c., &c.; but it is remarkable that it is *doubled* by St. John, see #Joh 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; #Joh 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20, 21, 38; #Joh 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18; and is never found iterated by any of the other evangelists. Some have supposed that the word אָמֵן is *contracted*, and contains the initials of אֲדֹנָי מֶלֶךְ נֶעֱמָן *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, #Re 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 Æthiopic 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 Gestæ*, *Acts or Transactions of the Apostles*, is the title it bears in the *Codex Bezae*. πραξεις των ἁγίων 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 *Æcumenius* 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, &c.*; 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 #Ac 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 **#Ac 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, &c., &c. 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, **#Ac 8:1-25**, the conversion of the Samaritans; and **#Ac 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, &c.

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 **#Ac 11:29, 30**, happened in the *fourth* year of the Emperor Claudius, which answers to the *forty-fourth* of the Christian era. 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 era, **#Ac 1:1** and ends probably with the *sixty-third*, **#Ac 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 endeavoured 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 æra of the world, 5531.
- Antiochian year of the world, 5521.
- Constantinopolitan year of the world, 5537.
- Year of the æra of the Seleucidæ, 341.
- Year of the Spanish æra, 67.
- Year of the Christian æra, 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.
- Epact, 20.
- Year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar, 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 æras, see the *Advertisement* prefixed to the Comment on the Gospel of St Matthew.

### CHAPTER I.

*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. I.

Verse 1. **The former treatise]** The Gospel according to Luke, which is here most evidently intended.

**O Theophilus]** See Clarke's note on "Lu 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, &c.]** 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 **#Lu 24:45**, it is said that *he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures*; and in **#Joh 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]** πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις; 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, **#1Co 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, **#Mt 28:1-9**. The *second*, to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, **#Lu 24:15**. The *third*, to Simon Peter, **#Lu 24:34**. The *fourth*, to ten of the apostles, Thomas being absent, **#Lu 24:36**, and **#Joh 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, **#Joh 20:26**. The *sixth*, to seven of the apostles in Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, **#Joh 21:4**. The *seventh*, to James, **#1Co 15:7**, most probably in Jerusalem, and when Jesus gave an order for all his apostles to *assemble together*, as in **#Ac 1:4**. The *eighth*, when they were assembled together, and when he led them unto Bethany, **#Lu 24:50**, from whence he ascended to heaven. But **see Clarke's note on "Joh 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 #Mr 16:14: #Lu 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 #Joh 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 ἀποκαθιστάνειν signifies to *reinstale*, 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, ἀποκαταστασις 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]** χρόνους η καιρους. Times here may signify any large portion of a *period*, *æra*, or *century*-such as an *Olympiad*, *lustrum* or *year*; and *seasons*, the particular *part*, *season*, or *opportunity* in that period, &c., 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*, ἐν τη ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ, 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]** ληψέσθε δύναμιν. Translating different terms of the original by the *same* English word is a source of misapprehension and error. We must not understand δύναμις which we translate *power* in this verse, as we do ἐξουσία, 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 δύναμις, in general, signifies such power, and is sometimes put for *that* of which it is the *cause*, viz. a *miracle*. See #Mt 7:22; 11:20-23; #Mt 13:54, 58; #Mr 6:5; #Lu 10:13; and #Ac 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 βουλεται ο μαθητης, αλλ' α συμφerei μαθειν, διδασκειν.

**Ye shall be witnesses-in all Judea, &c.]** Though the word *earth*, η γη, 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, #2Ki 17:5, &c., and who had no kind of religious connection with the Jews. See on #Mt 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, #Mt 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 #Mt 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 **Clarke's note on "Lu 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 **#Lu 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, **οὗ ἦσαν 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, **#Lu 24:49**. The words **καὶ τῇ δεήσει**, *and in supplication*, are omitted by ABC\*DE, both the *Syriac*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *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, **τῇ προσευχῇ** and **τῇ δεήσει**, *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, **#Mt 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]** **μαθητῶν**; but instead of this, **αδελφῶν**, *brethren*, is the reading of ABC, a few others, with the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *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, **#Lu 10:1**, &c., 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.]** *ἐλαχε 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 **#Le 16:8, 9; #Jos 14:2**: see also **#Ac 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 **#Mt 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*, &c., &c. 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 {**#Ac 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 {**#Ac 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. See Clarke "**Ac 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 **#Ps 69:25:** *Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents. And #Ps 109:8: Let his days be few, and let another take his office,* פקדוֹתוֹ *pekudato*, his *overship*, his *charge of visitation* or *superintendence*, translated by the SEPTUAGINT, τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς, 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 diocese, 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 ἐπὶ, *over*, and σκοπεῖν, *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 travelled, preached, enforced the discipline of the Church, and took care to prevent false doctrines, heresies, &c. 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*, &c., 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*, #Ac 4:36. But the person *here* is distinguished from the person *there*, by being called *Justus*.

Verse 24. **Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts]** σου, 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, &c.]** 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, &c. This is primarily the meaning of it in #Nu 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 #Ec 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. **See Clarke "Ac 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, &c., 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 **#Le 16:8, 9;** and **#Jos 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*, &c., from *calculus*, a small stone or pebble. From this use of the word, though it signifies in general *to sum up*, *associate*, &c., 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 Clarke's notes on "Joh 17:1"**, &c. 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, *failing 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 **#Mt 27:5**.

5. Others think that he died or was *suffocated* through excessive *grief*; and that thus the terms in the text, and in **#Mt 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 honour, 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, **see Clarke "Mt 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 ἀπηξάτο, #Mt 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, #2Ch 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; בִּתְחָלָיִם בִּתְחָלָיִם bethachalaim, with inflammations, or ulcers.* The death of *Herod* was probably of the same kind, #Ac 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: 1. 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 endeavoured 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*, #Ac 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*, #Ac 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*, #Ac 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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*, &c., &c., 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, #Mt 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 #Mt 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 favourable 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, see Clarke on "Mt 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 honour 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 came 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, &c., 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.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER II.

*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. II.

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 πεντηκοστή 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 **#Le 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, שמחה 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 **#Ac 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 concentrated 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 **#Ac 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, **#Ac 2:15**, which was the Jewish hour of *morning prayer*, as the *ninth* hour was the hour of *evening prayer*, **#Ac 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, **#1Ki 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 Clarke's note on "**Ac 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, **#Ex 3:2, 3**; and thus he manifested himself when he delivered the *law* on Mount Sinai,

**#Ex 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 **#Ge 15:9-17**, is given, instead of the *burning lamp* passing between the divided pieces of the victim, **#Ge 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, **#2Ch 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 æra.

"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 *Æneid* of Virgil will recollect:-

*Talia vociferans gemitu tectum omne replebat:  
Cum subitum, dictuque oritur mirabile monstrum.  
Namque manus inter, mæstorumque ora parentum.  
Ecce levis summo de vertice visus Iuli  
Fundere lumen apex, tactuque innoxia molli  
Lambere flamma comas, et circum tempora pasci.  
Nos pavidī trepidare metu, crinemque flagrantem  
Excutere, et sanctos restinguere fontibus ignes.  
At pater Anchises oculos ad sidera lætus  
Extulit, et cælo palamas cum voce tetendit:*

*Jupiter omnipotens*—

*Da auxilium, pater, atque hæc omina firma.*

VIRG. ÆN. 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 #Isa 5:24, שֵׁן לֶשׁוֹן *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 #Jos 15:2, שֵׁן לֶשׁוֹן *lashon*, a tongue. And in #Jos 15:5, what appears to have been a *promontory* is called שֵׁן לֶשׁוֹן הַיָּם *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 ἀποφθεγγεσθαι 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 *ἀνδρες εὐλαβεις*, *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, &c., 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 **Ac 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 **1Co 14:1**, &c.

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 neighbouring 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 *Maverannhar*, 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 *Æthiopia* 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 *neighbouring* countries, such as Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, and Cœlosyria, 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, Bœotia, Macedonia, Ætolia, 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, Eubœa, Cyprus, and Crete, not to mention the countries beyond the Euphrates. All these (a small part of Babylon and some other præfectures 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 γλευκος, 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 πατηθι. *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 præcordia 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]** *οἱ κατοικοῦντες* would be better translated by the word *sojourn*, because these were not *inhabitants* of Judea, but the *strangers* mentioned in **#Ac 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, &c.]** 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, **#Ge 15:1-21**; to Elijah, **#1Ki 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, **#Ge 37:5, 9**; of Jacob, **#Ge 28:1**, &c.; **#Ge 46:2**, &c.; of Pharaoh, **#Ge 41:1-7**; of Nebuchadnezzar, **#Da 4:10-17**. For the different ways in which God communicated the knowledge of his will to mankind, see the note on **#Ge 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 **#Mt 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 **Clarke's notes on "Mt 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 **Clarke's note on "Mt 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, &c., 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 **#Joh 1:14**; see also **#Ac 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, *ωρισμένη βούλη*; that counsel of God which *defined* the *time*, *place*, and *circumstance*, according (*προγνώσει*) 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, **#Re 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. **See Clarke "Ac 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, **#Joh 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 מוֹת* *chebley maveth*, in **#Ps 116:3**, or *חבלי שאול* *chebley sheol*, in **#Ps 18:5**, and in **#2Sa 22:6**, to which, as a parallel, this place has been referred. But Kypke has sufficiently proved that *λυειν τας ωδυνας θανατου*, signifies rather to *REMOVE the pains* or *sufferings of death*. So Lucian, *De 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 θαυμαστως*-*it wonderfully REMOVES the headache*, &c. 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 *αιδου*, *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 #Ps 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 **וַיִּגַּל כְּבוֹדִי** *vaiyagel kebodi*, "And my glory was glad:" but the evangelist follows the *Septuagint*, in reading **καὶ ἡγαλλίασατο ἡ γλῶσσα 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]** **εἰς ᾧδου**, *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 notes, **see Clarke "Mt 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*, &c., 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 ᾧδου**, *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 **ἐξ ᾧδου** *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*, *Æthiopic*, *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, &c.* "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 η ψυχη αυτου, *his soul*, are omitted by *ABCD*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, 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 **#Joh 14:16**, &c., **#Joh 16:7**, &c., and after he had risen from the dead. **#Lu 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*, &c. **See Clarke's note on these words, "Mt 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 **Clarke on "Mt 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]** εἰς ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, 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 fulfilment 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*, σωθήτε: 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 *ασμενω*, 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 ασμενω δεξαμεναι τους λογους συνησαν αυτοις*, Ant. 1. iv. c. 4. *Then they who approved of their words consorted with them.* The word is however omitted by ABCD, Coptic, Sahidic, Æthiopic, Vulgate, the Itala of the Codex Bezae, Clemens, and Chrysostom.

**Were baptized]** That is, *in the name of Jesus*, #Ac 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.]** *προσετεθησαν*, *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 fulfilment of the prophecy in #Ps 110:1, &c.: *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*, #Ps 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]** *κοινωνία*, *community*; meaning *association* for religious and spiritual purposes, The *community of goods* cannot be meant; for this is mentioned #Ac 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 #Mt 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]** *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*. "These words signify either, in *one time*, #Ac 3:1; or in *one place*, #Ac 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, #Ac 2:41, besides the 120 spoken of #Ac 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, #Ac 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*, #Ac 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, #1Co 16:1, &c., 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, #Ac 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' οἶκον*, 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 neighbour; 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 favour 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 yet 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 επι το αυτο, *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 encreased hem that weren maad saaf, eche day, into the same thing.* Nearly the same rendering as that in Wiclif. Our translation of τους σωζομενους, *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, **#Eph 2:8**: *By grace ye are saved*, εστε σεσωσμενοι; or, *ye are those who have been saved by grace*. So in **#Tit 3:5**: *According to his mercy he saved us*, εσωσεν ημας, *by the washing of regeneration*. And in **#1Co 1:18**, we have the words τοις σωζομενοις, *them who are saved*, to express those who had received the Christian faith; in opposition to τοις απολλυμενοις, *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 **#1Co 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' ου και σωζεσθε. 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 **#Ac 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 *pretereity*, 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 pretereity 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 neighbour, 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!

# ACTS

## CHAPTER III.

*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. III.

Verse 1. **Peter and John went up together]** The words *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*, which we translate *together*, and which are the first words in this chapter in the Greek text, we have already seen, **#Ac 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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, **#Ps 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, **#Ac 2:15**, answering, as we have already seen, to nearly our *nine* o'clock in the morning; the **SIXTH** hour, **#Ac 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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 ankle 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, **#Isa 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*, &c., 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, **#Joh 10:23.**

Verse 12. **As though by our own power]** δυναμει, *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 honour 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, &c.]** 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]** ηρνησασθε, 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 **#Ps 16:10: Thou wilt not suffer thy HOLY ONE to see corruption**; where the original word חַסִּידֵיךָ *Chasideyca*, thy HOLY ONE, is translated by the Septuagint, τον ὁσion 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, **#Mt 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 **#Heb 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 Saviour: *through faith in his name*, as the *Saviour*, and *author of life*, and all its concomitant blessings, such as *health*, &c. 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, **#Mr 16:17, 18**. And that whatsoever they asked of the Father in his name, he would grant it, **#Joh 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]** *οιδα*, *I know*. *Wot* is from the Anglo-Saxon, [A.S.] *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 offence 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]** *ἐπιστρέψατε*, 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 Clarke's note on "Nu 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*, #Mt 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 *ὥτως ἂν ἐλθωσι καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως*, should be translated, *THAT the times of refreshing MAY come*. *ἀναψύξις*, 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 Clarke on "Ac 3:21"**.

Verse 20. **Which before was preached unto you]** Instead of *προκεκηρυγμένον*, *before preached*, ABCDE, fifty-three others, both the Syriac, all the Arabic, the Armenian, Chrysostom, and others, have *προκεχειρισμένον*, 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 *ἀποκαταστασις*, from *ἀπο* which signifies *from*, and *καθιστάνειν*, to *establish* or *settle* any thing, viz. in a *good state*; and, when *ἀπο* 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 #Ac 1:6, when the disciples said to Christ, *Wilt*



*thou at this time restore again (ἀποκαθιστάνεις) 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 neighbour 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]** πάντων, *all*, is omitted by ABCD, some others, one Syriac, the Coptic, Æthiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate. Griesbach leaves it out of the text, and inserts the article τῶν, which the Greek MSS. have, in the place of πάντων. The text reads thus: *Which he hath spoken by his holy prophets, &c.*

**Since the world began.]** ἀπ' αἰῶνος; as αἰών 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 Clarke's note on "Ge 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, **see Clarke "De 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 **#Ps 99:6**, because there were few or no prophets between these two, **#1Sa 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, &c." The Jews have a saying, *Hieros. Chagigah*, fol. 77. שמואל דבן של גכיאים *Samuel was the chief of the prophets*. Perhaps it was in reference to this that Peter said, *All the prophets from Samuel, &c.*

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?

# ACTS

## CHAPTER IV.

*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. IV.

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, see **Clarke on "Lu 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, &c., to suppress the evidence of Christ's resurrection, and silence the apostles.

Verse 2. **Being grieved]** *δυσπνονοῦμενοι*, They were *thoroughly fatigued* with the continuance of this preaching; their minds suffered more *labour, 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 *ωσεί* *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 honour of seeing five of his sons fill that eminent place after him-an honour 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, #Joh 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 favour in the eyes of Cæsar, 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 Judæus, 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. l. 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, &c., 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, *ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει*, 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, &c., 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, #Mt 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]** ἐπὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ, 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, #Ps 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 Clarke's note on "Mt 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, #Mt 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]** τὴν παρρησίαν, 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]** ἀγράμματοι, Persons without literature, not brought up in nor given to literary pursuits-*and ignorant*, ἰδιῶται, 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]** ἐπεγινώσκον 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 #Ac 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]** προσάπειλησάμενοι, 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 κολασονται, *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 thugs 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 εχρισας, *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 #Ac 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, Æthiopic, 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 endeavouring to fulfil 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 #Ac 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, #Ac 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, Irenæus, and Bede*.

Verse 32. **The multitude of them that believed]** The whole 5000, mentioned #Ac 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 Bezaë*, another of great authority, E, two others, *Ambrose, Bede, Cyprian, and Zeno*. Diogenes Lærtius 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 Clarke's notes on "Ac 2:44", where this subject is examined. See Clarke below, "Ac 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 favour or grace of God; and they had much favour with all who feared God. In both these ways this clause may be understood; for χαρις means *favour*, whether that be evidenced by *benevolence* or *beneficence*, or by *both*. The favour of God is the *benevolence* of God; but his benevolence is never exerted without the exertions of his *beneficence*. Hence the *grace* or *favour* of God always implies a blessing or gift from the hand of his mercy and power. The favour 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 favour 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, &c., 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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, #1Co 14:3, the original name was probably בֶּר נָבִיא *Bar naba*, or בֶּר נְבִיאָה *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 #Ac 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 #Ac 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 travelled. 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. *Ex quovis ligno Mercurius non fit*: A blockhead never did, and never can, make a minister.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER V.

*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. V.

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, &c., their names are written in the dust. The import of his name, חַנַּנְיָה *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, κτῆμα, (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*, &c., 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]** *πνευμα το ἅγιον*, *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 *νοσφίζειν*, *νοσφίζεσθαι*, is used by the Greek writers to signify *purloining part of the public money*, *peculation*. 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 5:2", and see Clarke also on "Ac 2:44".

Verse 5. **Fell down, and gave up the ghost]** *πεσων ἐξεψυξε*, *Falling down, he expired, breathed his last*: "Gave up the ghost" is a very improper translation here. See Clarke's notes on "Ge 25:8", and see Clarke on "Mt 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 #Ac 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, #1Jo 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. **See Clarke "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. {#Ac 5:15}

**Solomon's porch.] See Clarke's note on "Joh 10:23".**

Verse 13. **And of the rest, durst no man join him self to them]** Who were these called *the rest*, τῶν λοιπῶν? 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* honour 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, #Ac 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. {#Ac 5:12} The following is the order in which all these verses should be read, from the 11th to the 15th. {#Ac 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, &c., &c.

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 solicitude 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 favour 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*, &c., 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 ρυθωσιν απο πασης ασθενειας*

ἡς εἶχον, 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 #Mt 4:24; 10:1; #Mr 1:32, 34; 16:17, 18; and #Lu 4:40, 41; 7:21.

Verse 17. **The high priest-and-the sect of the Sadducees]** αἵρεσις τῶν σαδδουκαίων, *The heresy of the Sadducees*. In this place, as well as in several others, the word αἵρεσις, *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*. αἵρεσις, *heresy*, comes from αἵρω, *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 ναζωραίων αἵρεσις, *the heresy of the Nazarenes*, #Ac 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*, #Ac 24:14; and it was according to the *strictest* HERESY in the Jewish Church, ακιριβεστατην αἵρεσιν, that St. Paul lived before his conversion, #Ac 26:5; and we find, from #Ac 28:22, that the *whole Church of Christ* was termed *this heresy*, ταύτης αἵρεσεως, and this by persons who intended *no reproach*, but wished simply to distinguish the *Christians* from *scribes*, *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, &c. *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 λιν, *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 Clarke on "Ac 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, 2. 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 #Ac 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, #Ac 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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 honoured the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets, had yet more highly honoured 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, #Ac 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 #Ac 3:15, 19.

**And a Saviour]** 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 Clarke's note on "Joh 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, #Mt 3:2.

**Forgiveness of sins.]** ἀφεσιν 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 Saviour 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 αὐτου, *his*, is omitted by AD, and several others of good note; the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Æthiopic*, 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 labour 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 #**Joh 14:22**, and #**Lu 6:16**, and called *Jude* in #**Jude 1:1**, is, in #**Mr 3:18**, called *Thaddeus*; and, in #**Mt 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]** *λεγον 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 **Clarke's note on "Lu 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 **#Lu 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 pretence 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 honour, 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 laboured 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, &c.]** The whole verse may be read thus: *But they departed rejoicing from the presence of the sanhedrin, because they there deemed worthy to be dishonoured on account of THE NAME*. The word, *α υτου*, *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 Saviour 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 labours with similar success.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER VI.

*The Hellenistic Jews complain against the Hebrews, that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration, 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, &c., 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. VI.

Verse 1. **A murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews]** Those who are here termed Grecians, *ελληνισταί*, 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 *πυθαγορικοί*, *Pythagoreans*; those who were of a different cast he termed *πυθαγορίσται*, *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 *Græcising Jews*. See *Jamblicus*, *De 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 ministration, 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, &c., for *each day of the week*.

**Of honest report]** μαρτυρουμενους 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 καταστησωμεν, *we may appoint*, καταστησομεν, *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, #Mt 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 פֶּרְנָסִים *parnasim*, from פָּרַנָּס *parnes*, to *feed*, *nourish*, *support*, *govern*. The פֶּרְנָס *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 חֵזָן *chazan*, and שָׁמַשׁ *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*, #2Co 6:4; #Eph 3:7; #Col 1:23: see also #2Co 11:15. Christ himself, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, is called the *deacon of the circumcision*, λεγω δε χριστον ιησουν διακονον γεγεννησθαι περιτομης, #Ro 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 τραπεζης*, *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, &c. 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 *diaconship 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 **#Ac 8:4**, &c. 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 Neocæsarea it was decreed that this number should never be exceeded, even in the largest cities: vide *Concil. Neocæsar.* 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 **Clarke's note on "Mt 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, &c., 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 **#Ex 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 **#Re 2:6, 15**, derived their origin. Dr. Lightfoot doubts this, and rather inclines to derive the name "from *נִיכּוֹלָא* *nicola*, let us eat together; those brutes encouraging each other to eat meats offered to idols, like those in **#Isa 22:13**, who said, *Let us eat flesh and drink wine*, &c." Both *Irenæus* 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 Clarke on "Re 2:6"**.

Verse 6. **And when they had prayed]** Instead of *καί, and*, the *Codex Bezae* reads *οὗτοι, 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, **#Ac 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, **#Ac 6:3**. 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. 6. The apostles, receiving them from the hands of the Church, consecrated them to God by *prayer*, imploring his blessing on them and their labour. 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 labour in, and necessity for his labour. 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 neighbours 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 fulfilment of those promises, he enjoyed much of the unction of the Divine Spirit, and much of the *favour* of his God; and, in consequence, he was full of *power*, *δυναμειως*, 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, &c.]** 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, #Ac 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 favour 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* (#Ac 2:10) lived in *Libya*, and the *Alexandrians* in the neighbourhood 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 habitæ inter Catholicos et Donatistas*, published with *Optatus's* works, Paris, 1679, (No. 201, and p. 57,) we have these words: *Victor episcopus Ecclesiæ Catholicæ 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. *Cunæus*, 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 neighbourhood, 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 endeavour 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 è sanguine natos*: their conduct proclaimed their genealogy.

Verse 10. **They there not able to resist the wisdom, &c.]** He was *wise*, well exercised and *experienced*, in Divine things; and, as appears by his defence, 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 reprov'd 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, #Mt 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, &c.* 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, &c.

Verse 12. **And they]** The Libertines, &c., 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 *splendour 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 *splendour 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 splendour 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 defence 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 favour, 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!

# ACTS

## CHAPTER VII.

*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, &c., 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 invokes the Lord Jesus, prays for his murderers, and expires, 59, 60.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VII.

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 *colour 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 #Ac 7:58; 8:1; 22:20.

Verse 2. **Men, brethren, and fathers**] Rather, *brethren and fathers*, for *ανδρες* should not be translated separately from *αδελφοι*. Literally it is men-brethren, a very usual form in Greek; for every person knows that *ανδρες αθηναιοι* and *ανδρες περσαι* should not be translated men-Athenians and men-Persians, but simply *Athenians* and *Persians*. See #Ac 17:22. So, in #Lu 2:15, *ανθρωποι ποιμενες* should be translated *shepherds*, not *men-shepherds*. And *ανθρωπος βασιλευς* #Mt 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 #Ac 8:27.

**The God of glory appeared, &c.]** 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 Clarke's note on "Ge 11:31".

**Before he dwelt in Charran]** This is called *Haran* in our translation of #Ge 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, see Clarke on "Ge 12:1".

Verse 4. **When his father was dead]** See Clarke's note on "Ge 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, #Ge 23:3-18, it is obvious he had no *inheritance* there.

**And to his seed after him]** See #Ge 12:7; 13:15, and the notes there.

Verse 6. **That his seed should sojourn in a strange land]** See #Ge 15:13, 14.

**Four hundred years.]** MOSES says, #Ex 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, #Ga 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 ἐγώ, *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 **#Ro 13:2**; **#1Co 11:29**, compared with **#1Co 11:30, 31**." The Egyptians, to whom the Israelites were in bondage, were punished by the *ten plagues*, described **#Ex 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 **#Ge 17:10**, &c.

**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*, &c. See **Clarke's note on "Ac 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 favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh]** God gave him much *wisdom*, in consequence of which he had *favour* with the king of Egypt. See the whole of this remarkable history explained at large, **#Ge 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 **#Ge 46:20**. It is well known that in **#Ge 46:27**, and in **#De 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, **#Ge 50:13**, that Jacob was buried in the cave of the field of *Machpelah* before Mamre. And in **#Jos 24:32**, and **#Ex 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 honour 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*, #Ge 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, #Ge 33:19; #Jos 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 ἀνησάτο τιμης ἀργυρίου, 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 ἀνησάτο, *bought*, had no *nominative* case joined to it, and did not know where to find the proper one, seem to have inserted ἀβρααμ, *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 **Clarke's note on "Ex 1:8"**.

Verse 19. **The same dealt subtilty]** οὗτος κατασοφισαμενος, A word borrowed from the Septuagint, who thus translate the Hebrew לִי נִחְכְּמָה לֹא 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 #Ge 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 ἀιγυπτιαζειν, 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]** αἰσθητός τῷ θεῷ, Was fair to God, i.e. was divinely beautiful. See **Clarke's note on "Ex 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 εργων. 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 **#Heb 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, **#Ex 2:11, 12**.

Verse 25. **He supposed his brethren would have understood, &c.]** 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 Clarke on "Ex 2:13"**, &c.

Verse 30. **In a flame of fire in a bush.]** See this and the following verses largely explained in the notes, see Clarke **#Ex 3:1-8**.

Verse 36. **He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders, &c.]** 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, &c.]** This very Moses, so highly esteemed and honoured by God, announced that very prophet whom ye have lately put to death. See the observations at **#De 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]** λογία 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, #Ro 3:2; #Heb 5:12; and to *Divine revelation* in general, #1Pe 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 #Ex 32:1-35.

Verse 42. **Then God turned, and gave them up, &c.]** 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, #Am 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 ונשאתם את סכות מלככם 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 *Raiphon* 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 כִּיּוֹן Chiun, which might possibly be a corruption of רִיפָן Reiphon, as it would be very easy to mistake the כִּי caph for רֶ resh, and the vau shurek ו for פֶּ 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, &c.; 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, **#Ac 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, צִלְמֵיכֶם *tsalmeycem*, your *tselems*, τοὺς τυπούς, the types or simulachres of your gods. See **Clarke's note on "Ge 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 neighbours, the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, &c., 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 **#2Ki 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 labours 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, &c. 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, see **Clarke "Ex 25:8"**, &c., 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 **#Ex 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 #2Sa 7:2, &c., and see the purpose, #Ps 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, #1Ki 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 #Isa 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, &c.*, 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 clamour 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,* #Jer 6:10.

"2. The uncircumcision of the LIPS. *How shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised LIPS?* #Ex 6:12.

"3. Uncircumcision of HEART. *If then their uncircumcised HEARTS be humbled, #Le 26:41. Circumcise therefore the FORESKIN of your HEART, #De 10:16; #Jer 4:4. For all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the HEART, #Jer 9:26.*

"4. The uncircumcision of the FLESH. *Ye shall circumcise the FLESH of your FORESKIN, &c., #Ge 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* endowed 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, &c.*, 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, &c. 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, &c., 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, &c.]** 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: #Ac 3:14; 22:14; and #Jas 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*, διαταγαι, 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 #Ps 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, #Ga 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*, #Heb 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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 splendour 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 **#Ac 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 **Clarke's note on "Le 24:23"**.

**The witnesses laid down their clothes]** To illustrate this whole transaction, see the observations at the end of this chapter. See **Clarke "Ac 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 *εκοιμήθη*, *fell asleep*, one MS. adds, *εν ειρήνῃ*, *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 **Clarke's note on "Le 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, #Le 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 defence, 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*, &c.

"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, &c.*" 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 Saviour 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, #De 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 μαρτυρ implies; the person who, at the evident risk and ultimate loss of his life, bears testimony to TRUTH. This honour, 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 honour 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.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER VIII.

*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 reproved 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 Cæsarea, 39, 40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VIII.

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: #Ac 8:1, 14, 25; #Ac 9:26, 27; 11:1, 2; #Ac 12:1-4; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; #Ac 21:17, 18; #Ga 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 æra of the Church arose. Hitherto the apostles and disciples confined their labours 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*, &c., of the soldier were put in the same grave; the *faithful dog* of the hunter, &c., &c. 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 *συρω* 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, **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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, **#Ac 6:5**, called afterwards, *Philip the Evangelist*, **#Ac 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 *Sebasté*, 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 *Cæsarea*, in compliment to Augustus Cæsar,) is always called *Cæsarea*, 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, **#Joh 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 **#Mt 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*, &c., 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 **Clarke's note, "Le 16:8; "Le 16:9"; and #Jos 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] *Majoosean*, from which we have our word *magician*. **See Clarke's note on "Mt 2:1".**

**And bewitched the people of Samaria**] *ἐξίστων*, *Astonishing*, *amazing*, or *confounding* the judgment of the people, from *ἐξίστημι*, 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 *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, later *Syriac*, *Vulgate*, *Itala*, *Origen*, and *Irenæus*, the word *καλουμένη* is *added* before *μεγάλη*, 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 endeavoured 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]** *ἐξίστατο*, 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 *ἐξίστατο* comes from the same root, *ἐξίστημι*, as the word *ἐξίστων*, in **#Ac 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. {**#Ac 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, &c.]** 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 fulness!

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, &c.*, see proved in the note on #Nu 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, &c.*, &c., which it produces. In #De 29:18, idolatry and its

consequences are expressed, by having among them *a root that beareth* GALL and WORMWOOD. And in #Heb 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:* (ὡς πολλὰ κλαίων ου διελιμπανεν) 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*, *Irenæus*, *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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 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 #Ac 9:11: *Arise, go into the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus, &c.* And another instance, still more particular, in #Ac 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.]** αὕτη ἐστὶν ἐρημος, *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 traveller passed through, when he went from Phœnicia 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 Phœnicia to Egypt, ἐπὶ τῇ ἀρχῇ τῆς ἐρημοῦ, 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 μένουσα ἐρημος, *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 ἐρημος, *desert*, should be referred, not to Gaza, but to ὁδός, 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]** ἀνὴρ αἰθιοψ̃ should be translated *an Ethiopian*, for the reasons given on #Ac 7:2.

**An eunuch]** See this word interpreted, on #Mt 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 #Ge 37:36; 39:1. And it is likely that this Ethiopian was of the same sort.

**Of great authority]** δυνάστης, *A perfect lord chamberlain* of the royal household; or, rather, her *treasurer*, for it is here said, *he had charge of all her treasure*, ἣν ἐπὶ πασῆς τῆς γαζῆς αὐτῆς. The apparent Greek word γαζα, *Gaza*, is generally allowed to be *Persian*, from the authority of Servius, who, in his comment on Æn. lib. i. ver. 118:-

*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto,  
Arma virum, tabulæque, 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 Palæstina dicitur, quod in ea Cambyses rex Persarum cum Ægyptiis 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 favoured. 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 æra. Their conversion is with great probability attributed to *Fruementius*, 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: Τούτων δ' ἦσαν καὶ οἱ βασιλισσῆς στρατηγοὶ τῆς Κανδακῆς, ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἡρᾷ τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν, ἀνδρική τις γυνή, πεπηρωμένη τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν, "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 æra, 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, *Ædificia oppidi (Meroes) pauca: regnare fæminam 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 **#1Ki 10:1**, &c., we have the account of the visit paid to Solomon by the *queen of Sheba*, the person to whom our Lord refers, **#Mt 12:42**, and **#Lu 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 Saviour calls her queen of the south; and she is called, in **#1Ki 10:1**, &c., **#2Ch 9:1**, &c., 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 {**#Ps 45:1**, &c.} 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, &c. 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 **Clarke's note on "Mt 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, &c.* 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 *דורו* *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 favour? This circumstance I have noticed before, and it has been particularly remarked in the case



of Stephen: see at **#Ac 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 text 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 *Crisews* 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 Ε Ο Ν

*The Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch:*

Α Γ Γ Ε Α Ο Χ Δ Ε Κ Υ Η Ρ Η 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 neighbouring 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, #Jos 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 Cæsarea.]** This was *Cæsarea* in *Palestine*, formerly called *Strato's Tower*, built by Herod the Great in honour 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 *Cæsarea Philippi*, which was an inland town not far from the springs of Jordan. Whenever the word *Cæsarea* occurs without *Philippi*, the former is intended. As Philip preached in all the cities of Palestine till he came to Cæsarea, 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 Cæsarea. 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 #Ac 21:8, that Philip settled at Cæsarea, 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.

## ACTS

### CHAPTER IX.

*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 endeavour to slay him; but the disciples take him to Cæsarea, 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. IX.

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:

*Ες 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 επιβαθειους.*

*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 πνελοντες αβαντες*, the *Abantes breathing strength*.-Il. ii. 536. And how frequently he speaks of his *fierce* countrymen as, *μενεα πνελοντες 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 #Ac 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 דַּמַּשְׁק *Damask*, and דַּרְמַשְׁק *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 *Chrysorrhoas*, 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, #Ge 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 æra; and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of *Isaiah*, #Isa 17:1-3, and that of *Amos*, #Am 1:4, 5. It was also taken by *Sennacherib*, and by the *generals* of Alexander the Great. *Metellus* and *Lælius* 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 דֶּרֶךְ *derec* in Hebrew, and ὁδός, *hodos*, in Hellenistic Greek, are often to be understood. דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה *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, **דֶּרֶךְ הַנּוֹצְרִים** *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 εἰ, κύριε;** *Who art thou, SIR?* He had no knowledge who it was that addressed him, and would only use the term **κύριε**, 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 *Æthiopic*, and *Armenian*; and was probably borrowed from **#Ac 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, &c.]** **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**, *kentron*, 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 endeavouring 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 ÆSCHYLUS, in *Agamemnon*, ver. 1633:-

Προς κεντρα μη λακτιζε.

*Kick not against the goads.*

And again in *Prometh. Vinc.* 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 istæc: 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 endeavouring, 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 plagæ. Nunquam stimulo lacessat juvencum, quod retractantem calcitrosumque eum reddit: nonnunquam tamen admoneat flagello.*" COLUMELLA, *De Re 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, #Col 3:21; but bring them up (εν παιδεία και νουθεσία κυρίου) in the discipline and admonition of the Lord, #Eph 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, &c.]** 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 ευνεοι, *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, #1Ki 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 Lord; 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 #Ac 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*, &c.; 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 splendour 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, #Ac 9:17, he says, *The Lord Jesus that APPEARED unto THEE in the way as thou camest*, &c. 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, #Ac 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, #1Co 9:1, put the subject out of dispute: *Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? HAVE I NOT SEEN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD? To which may be added, #1Co 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 οὐδενᾶ, *no man*, the *Codex Alexandrinus*, the *Syriac*, *Vulgate*, and some others, have οὐδεν *nothing*. He not only saw *no man*, but he saw *nothing*, being quite blind; and therefore was led by the hand to Damascus, μη βλέπων, 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 #Ac 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 Clarke on "Ac 9:17".*

**To him said the Lord in a vision]** ἐν ὁράματι, 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 Cæsar, 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, &c.**] 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 *כֵּלֵי* *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, **#Ru 2:9**, *When thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink, &c.*, there are these remarkable words . " *כֵּלֵי 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 **#1Th 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 **#Jer 22:7**: *They shall cut down the choice cedars*, *וכרתו מבחר ארני* *vecaretu MIBCHAR arzeyca*; *και εκκοψουσιν τας εκλεκτας 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 favour—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*, #1Ti 2:7; #2Ti 1:11. See also #Ga 2:7, 8, and #Eph 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*, &c., 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 honours 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 honour 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, **#Joh 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 humour 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*, *Æthiopic*, *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 πορθῆσας*. The verb *πορθεῖν* 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*, #Ac 26:11. 2. He shut up many of the *saints in prison*, #Ac 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 #Ac 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]** *συνέχυνε*, Overwhelmed them so with his arguments that they were obliged to *blush* for the weakness of their own cause.

**Proving that this]** *οὗτος*, This person, viz. JESUS, *is very Christ*; *ἐστὶν ὁ χριστός*, IS THE CHRIST, or *Messiah*. See Clarke on "Ac 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 #Ga 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, **#Jos 2:15**.

Verse 26. **He assayed to join himself to the disciples]** *πειρατο κολλασθαι*, He *endeavoured 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*, **#Ga 1:19**. It appears that he went up at this time to Jerusalem merely *to see Peter, with whom he abode fifteen days*, **#Ga 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 **#Ga 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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 6:1"**, where this subject is largely explained.

Verse 30. **They brought him down to Cæsarea]** Calmet contends that this was *Cæsarea of Palestine*, and not *Cæsarea Philippi*; it being his opinion, and indeed that of others, that where this word occurs without any addition, in the New Testament, *Cæsarea of Palestine* is meant, and not *Cæsarea Philippi*. See **Clarke on "Ac 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 *ἡ ἐκκλησία*, *the Churches*, ABC, several others, the *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*, have *ἡ ἐκκλησία*, *the Church*. Every assembly of God's people was *a Church*; the aggregate of these assemblies was *THE CHURCH*. The word *εὐρηνην*, 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 Cæsar?' 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, &c.

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. 1. 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, **#1Pe 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, #Eph 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 **#Ac 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, &c., 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 *Cephas* in Hebrew, and *Petros* in Greek. Paul was called *Saul* in Hebrew, and *Paulos* in Greek. The person in **#Ac 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 honour 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, **#Jos 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] *tethitho* is the word in the Syriac version, and is their manner of writing the Hebrew תְּבִי *tsebi*, the תְּבִי *teth* being changed for the צְ *tsaddi*. The word [Syriac] *tabio*, and the feminine [Syriac] *tabitho*, have the same meaning as the Hebrew תְּבִי *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*:-

Ὡς εἰπων, ἑταροῖσις ἐκεκλετο διὸς Ἀχιλλεύς,  
Ἄμμι πυρὶ στήσαι τρίποδα μέγαν, ὅφρα ταχίστα  
Πατρόκλον λουσεῖαν-----  
Καὶ τότε δὴ λουσάν τε, καὶ ἡλείψαν λιπ' ἐλαίῳ---  
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:-

Τόφρα δὲ παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν κείσθαι αὐτῷ·  
Ἄμμι δὲ σὲ Τρῶαι καὶ Δαρδανίδες βαθυκόλποι  
Κλαύουσιν, νυκτὰς τε καὶ ἡμέρας δακρυχεύουσαι  
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, *Æneid* vi. ver. 212.

*Nec minus interea Misenum in littore Teucri  
Flebant, et cineri ingrato suprema ferebant.*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
*Pars calidos latices et æna undantia flammis  
Expediunt, corpusque lavant frigentis et ungunt  
Fit gemitus: tum membra toro defleta reponunt,  
Purpureasque super vestes, velamina nota,  
Conjiciunt, &c.*

"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, **see Clarke on "Ge 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 favour 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 *απεστελάν* 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 laboured.

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 #Ac 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, #Ac 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*, #Ro 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, an 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 honours of his nation; but he willingly forfeited all his secular privileges and well grounded expectations of secular honour 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 defence 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?



# ACTS

## CHAPTER X.

*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 Cæsarea, 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 Saviour 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. X.

I have already observed (see the conclusion of the preceding chapter) that hitherto the apostles confined their labours 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 Cæsarea]** This was *Cæsarea 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 Clarke's notes on "Mt 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. ccccxiii-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 Blæsus* 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 #Lu 1:1, &c., and #Lu 3:1, &c., and the notes there.

Verse 2. A **devout** man] εὐσεβής, from εὖ, 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 #Ac 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 honour 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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 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, **#Da 9:20-23**, and that especially to Zachariah, the father of John Baptist, **#Lu 1:11**, &c.

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 **#Le 2:16**, is said to be אֶזְכְּרָה *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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 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 **#Ac 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 Cæsarea.

Verse 9. **On the morrow, as they went on their journey]** From Joppa to Cæsarea 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 travelled 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 defence, 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, &c. 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]** ἐπεπεσεν ἐπ' αὐτον ἐκστασις, *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, &c.

Verse 12. **All manner of four-footed beasts, &c.]** 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 **#Le 11:1**, &c., 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 Æneas to Dido; when the cloud in which he was involved suddenly dissipated, and he appeared with the exclamation,

—————*coram, quem quæritis, adsum!*  
Æn. 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, &c.]** They gave him the simple relation which they had received from their master. For the character of Cornelius, see the comment, **see Clarke "Ac 10:2"**.

**To hear words of thee.]** But of what kind they could not as yet tell.

Verse 23. **Then called he them in, &c.]** 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 **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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 Cæsarea, 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, &c.]** 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, &c.]** 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, **#Ac 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, &c., 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*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*; but it has not been omitted in any *edition* of the Greek Testament.

Verse 31. **Thy prayer is heard]** See Clarke's note on "Ac 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*, *Æthiopic*, *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 favour to the *Gentiles*; and that the descendants of Jacob only should enjoy his peculiar favour 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 favourable 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 favour, or interest, or bribe, a culprit is acquitted, and a righteous or innocent person condemned. See #Le 19:15; #De 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 favour (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, &c.]** *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 neighbour, *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*, &c., 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 favour, 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 neighbour 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**, &c.] 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 #Ac 10:37, should be omitted as it is in the *Codex Bezae*, and its *Itala* version; and if *ον*, which is in #Ac 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 laboured 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 fulfil 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 [A.S.] and [A.S.], *life*, and [A.S.], *grass*; and from this our *quicks*, *quick-set* hedges, fences made of *living* thorns, &c. 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 #Isa 9:6; 52:7; 53:5, 6; 59:20; #Jer 31:34; #Da 9:24; #Mic 7:18, &c.; and #Zec 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 **#Ac 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 Saviour 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*, #Ro 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.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XI.

*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 Phœnice, 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. XI.

Verse 1. **And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea]** According to *Calmet*, Judea is here put in opposition to Cæsarea, 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, &c.*

Verse 4. **But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order]** ἐξετίθετο αυτοις καθεξης. This is the very *style* of St. Luke; see his Gospel, **#Lu 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, **#Ac 10:6**, Peter *shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do*; and, in **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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 fulfilment 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, &c.]** 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, &c. 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 **#Ac 15:5**, &c., 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 **#Ac 21:21**, &c.

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 **#Ac 8:1**.

**Phœnice]** Phœnicia, a country between Galilee and Syria, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, including Tyre, Sidon, &c. It is often mentioned as a part of Syria. See #Ac 21:2, 3.

**Cyprus]** An island of the Mediterranean Sea, over against Syria. See Clarke on "Ac 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 #Ac 9:29, viz. Jews living in Greek cities and speaking the Greek language. But, instead of *Ἑλληνιστας*, *Grecians*, *Ἕλληνας*, *Greeks*, is the reading of AD\*, *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Vulgate*, some copies of the *Itala*, *Eusebius*, *Chrysostom*, *Theophylact*, and *Æcumenius*. 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 #Ac 6:1. And it is likely that these Cyprians and Cyrenians had heard of Peter's mission to Cæsarea, 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 favour. 2. The manifestations of that favour in the communication of spiritual blessings. And, 3. Principles of light, life, holiness, &c., 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 labours 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, *προσμενεντω 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 fulfilment 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 #Ac 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*, #Ac 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 favoured 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, **#Mt 2:12**; **#Lu 2:26**; and in the preceding chapter of this book, **#Ac 10:22**. If, therefore, the name was given by *Divine appointment*, it is 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 **#Ac 26:28**, and in **#1Pe 4:16**.

Verse 27. **Came prophets from Jerusalem**] Though the term *prophet* is used in the New Testament simply to signify a *teacher*, (see **Clarke's note on "Ge 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, **#Ac 11:28**, though, perhaps, his ordinary character was that of a *teacher* or *preacher*. It seems from various scriptures, **#Ro 12:4**, &c., **#1Co 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 honour 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 **#Eph 2:20**; **3:5**, we learn that the *prophets* of the Christian Church were *inferior* to the *apostles*; but, from **#Eph 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, **#Ac 21:10**. He was probably a *Jew*, but whether converted now to Christianity we cannot tell.

**Great dearth throughout all the world**] The words *ἐφ' 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." ἐπὶ τοῦτοις δὴ καὶ τὸν μέγαν λιμὸν κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν συνέβη γενέσθαι.

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 Cuspidus 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, **#Ac 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 Cæcina 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's* *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, #Lu 10:1, or the one hundred and twenty mentioned, #Ac 1:15, or the seven deacons, #Ac 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. 3. 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 #Ac 6:1, &c.

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, #Ac 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, #Ac 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.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XII.

*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. XII.

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*, *Batanæa*, 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 #**Lu 3:1**; see also an account of the Herod family, see in **Clarke's note on "Mt 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 #**Mt 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*; 3. *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. #Mt 26:2: *Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover*. [Anglo-Saxon] *Wite ye that aeftter twam dagum beoþ Eastro*. #Mt 16:19: *And they made ready the passover*. [Anglo-Saxon] *And hig gegearwodon hym Eafter thenunga* (i.e. the *paschal supper*.) Prefixed to #Mt 28:1, are these words: [Anglo-Saxon] *This part to be read on Easter even*. And, before #Mt 28:8, these words: [Anglo-Saxon] #Mr 14:12: *And the first day of unleavened bread when they killed the passover*. [Anglo-Saxon] *And þam forman dæge azimorum, tha hi Eastron oftrodon*. 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 *fervour* 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, [A.S.], *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 endeavoured 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 favoured 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*, &c. 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*, &c., &c.

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 *ἄγγελος* 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 #Ac 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 #Ac 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, &c., ordinarily suffered the same kind of punishment which should have been inflicted on the prisoner whose escape they were supposed to have favoured.

**He went down from Judea to Cæsarea]** 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 Cæsarea, 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 endeavoured 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 **#1Ki 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 **#Eze 27:17**.

Verse 21. **Upon a set day, &c.]** A day on which games, &c., were exhibited in honour 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 Cæsarea, and there exhibited shows and games in honour 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 theatre 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 dishonourable 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 honour that was due to God alone. **See Clarke on "Ac 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 **#Ac 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, (*ηϋξανε*, it grew, as corn grows, the *stalk* and the *ear*; *καὶ ἐπληθύνετο*, 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, **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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, **#Ac 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 off 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 honour.

## ACTS

### CHAPTER XIII.

*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 endeavoured 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. XIII.

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 **#Ac 11:27**.

**Barnabas**] Of whom see before, **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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 Manæn 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, *λειτουργούντων*, signifies *performing the office of praying, supplicating, rendering thanks, &c.*: hence the word *λειτουργία*, *liturgy, the work of prayer, &c.*, from *λιτή*, *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, **#Ac 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, &c.* 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, &c." 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.*" #Jer 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 Clarke on "Ac 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, #Ac 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, Æthiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, and Itala*; 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 *Papas*. 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*, &c. 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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*, &c.

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 *Cæsarean* 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 **Clarke's note on "Mt 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*, &c.; 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*, &c.



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,** שְׂאֻל *Shaul*, was the name of the first Israelitish king, and signifies *asked, sought*; from שָׁאַל *shaal*, he asked, inquired, &c.

**Paul, Paulus,** if derived from the Latin, signifies *little, dwarfish*: but if from the Hebrew, פָּלַא *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, #Isa 9:6: *his name shall be called* (פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ pelé yoêts) *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, &c., in the New Testament, who are called the *servants of God*; and it is used by Paul himself, #Col 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, שְׂאֻל *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 #1Sa 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, #2Co 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]** ἐχθρεπαστης δικαιοσυνης; Opposed in thy heart to all that is *just*, *true*, and *good*.

**Wilt thou not cease to pervert, &c.]** ου παυση διαστρεφων. Wilt thou not cease *perverting*? He had probably laboured 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, *διὰ 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]** *αχλος*, *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]** **πεπιάγων**. 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 **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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*, **#Ac 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 *Haphtaroth*, 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 labour.

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, **#Ac 7:1-53**, is directed to the *Jews* alone; and this was probably spoken either in *Hebrew* or *Greek*.

**Ye men and brethren]** *ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί*, *Men brethren*, a Hebraism for, "Ye men who are our brethren," i.e. *Jews*, as we ourselves are; but *ἄνδρες* is often an expletive, as we have already seen. See Clarke's note on "Ac 7:2".

**If ye have any word of exhortation]** *εἰ ἐστὶ λόγος ἐν ὑμῖν παρακλήσεως*. *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 *παρακλήσις* 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, **בְּזֵרוֹעַ רָמָה** *bezeroâ 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**] **ἐτροποφορήσεν αὐτοὺς**; He dealt indulgently with them: howsoever they behaved towards him, he mercifully bore with, and kindly treated them. But instead of **ἐτροποφορήσεν**, ACE, some others, with the *Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Æthiopic*, and some of the fathers, read **ἐτροφοφορήσεν**, 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, **#Nu 11:12**; **#Ex 19:4**; **#Isa 46:3, 4; 63:9**.

Verse 19. **Destroyed seven nations**] The *Canaanites, Hittites, Girgasites, Amorites, Hivites, Peresites*, and *Jebusites*. The rabbins frequently call them **שִׁבְעָה אֲרָמוֹת** *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 **#1Ki 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, *καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, ὥς ἔτεσι τετρακοσίοις καὶ πεντήκοντα*, should be referred to the words going *before*, #Ac 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*, #Ge 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 *ὥς*, *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 *ὥς*, *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; #Ac 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: **שׁוּל 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 **#1Sa 15:28; 28:17, 18; #1Ch 10:13, 14; #Ps 78:70, &c.; #Ps 89:20, &c.**"

Verse 23. **Of this man's seed hath God-raised-a Saviour]** 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 **#Mt 1:1, &c.**, and particularly in the notes at the end of Luke 3. And that the Messiah was promised to come from the family of David, see **#Isa 11:1, 2, and #Jer 23:5, 6.**

Verse 24. **John-preached-the baptism of repentance]** On the nature and effects of John's preaching, see **Clarke's notes on "Mt 3:1", &c.**, and **#Lu 3:10-15.**

Verse 25. **As John fulfilled his course]** *As John was fulfilling his race, he said, &c.* 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, &c., 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 Clarke note on "Ac 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, &c. 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, &c.]** 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 fulfilment of the promise made unto the fathers.

Verse 33. **Written in the second Psalm]** Instead of τῷ ψαλμῷ τῷ δευτέρῳ *the second Psalm*, πρῶτῳ ψαλμῷ, *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 *De 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 **#Lu 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*, **#Ro 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 **#Isa 55:3**; where the Hebrew is חַסְדֵי דָוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים *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*, **#1Co 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 **#2Sa 7:11, 12, &c.**, explained by what is said in **#Ps 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, **#Isa 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 **#Ps 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 #Ac 2:29, 30, &c.

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 #Ac 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, &c.]** 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 #Hab 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:-

ראו בגוים והביטו והתמהו תמהו כי פעל פעל בימכם לא תאמינו כי יספר

*Reu bagoyim vehabitu vehitammehu; temehu; ki poal pael 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. ἴδετε οἱ καταφρονῆται, καὶ ἐπιβλέψατε, καὶ θαυμάσατε θαυμασία, καὶ ἀφανισθῆτε· διότι ἔργον ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν, ὃ οὐ μὴ πιστευσῆτε, ἐὰν τις ἐκδιηγῆται ὑμῖν. 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. ἴδετε οἱ καταφρονῆται, καὶ ἐπιβλέψατε, καὶ θαυμάσατε, θαυμασία, καὶ ἀφανισθῆτε· ὅτι ἔργον ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν, ἔργον ὃ οὐ μὴ πιστευσῆτε, ἐὰν τις ἐκδιηγῆται ὑμῖν. 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 ἐπιβλέψατε and θαυμασία 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 בגוים *bagoyim*, among the heathen, wrote בגדים *bogadim*, despisers, or transgressors: a word which differs only in a *single letter*, ד *daleth*, 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 *daleth* 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, Æthiopic, 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 favour 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 a *leaven* in every place.

Verse 45. **The Jews-were filled with envy]** See Clarke on "**Ac 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]** *παρησιασασμενοι*; 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, **#Mr 16:15**; **#Lu 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 **#Isa 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 *Saviour*, 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 #Ac 13:43, who possessed the reverse of the *disposition* of those Jews who *spake against those things, contradicting and blaspheming*, #Ac 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, &c.]** 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 Clarke on "Ac 13:44".**



Verse 50. **Devout and honourable 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, (**#Mt 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, **#Ac 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, **#Ac 13:7-22**.

3. His proposition, that *Jesus* was the Christ, the Saviour of the world, **#Ac 13:23**.

4. The illustration of this proposition, proving its truth: 1. From Christ's stock and family, **#Ac 13:23**. 2. From the testimony of his forerunner, **#Ac 13:24**. 3. From the resurrection of Christ, **#Ac 13:30**; which was corroborated with the testimony of many Galileans, **#Ac 13:31**, and of the prophets, David, **#Ac 13:33, 35**, and Isaiah, **#Ac 13:34**.

5. He anticipates objections, relative to the unjust condemnation, death and burial of Christ, **#Ac 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, **#Ac 13:38, 39**. 2. The danger to which they were exposed who should despise and reject it, **#Ac 13:40, 41**.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XIV.

*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. XIV.

Verse 1. **In Iconium]** See the conclusion of the preceding chapter.

**So spake]** *καὶ λαλῆσαι οὕτως*. 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*, *ἑλλήνων*, 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]** *τῶν ἐθνῶν*, Such as were mere *heathens*, and thus distinguished from the *Jews*, and the *Greeks* who were proselytes.

**Evil affected]** *ἐκακώσαν*, *Irritated or exasperated their minds against the brethren*, the disciples of Christ; one of their appellations before they were called *Christians* at Antioch. **See Clarke on "Ac 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]** *παρρησιαζόμενοι*, 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 favour* 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]** ὁρμη, 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. Asiæ, 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]** ἀδυνατος τοῖς ποσίν, He had no muscular power, and probably his ancle 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 #Ac 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 #Ac 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, **Clarke's note on "Ac 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, &c., 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 ευνομην εφορωντες.  
Hom. Odyss. 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, #Ge 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 lustrò sub imagine terras.  
Longa mora est, quantum noxæ sit ubique repertum,  
Enamerare: 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 travelled 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 travelled 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, *ὁ ἡγούμενος τοῦ λόγου*, *he was the chief or leader of the discourse*, was applied to Mercury. So Jamblichus de Myster. Init. *θεὸς ὁ τῶν λόγων ἡγεμὼν ὁ ἑρμῆς*. 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 expliquee* of Montfaucon; and various inscriptions, relative to his character as *guardian*, &c., 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 præstantissima forma  
Sistitur ante aras; et vittis præsignis 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:-

*Sæpe 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*, endeavours to illustrate this sense of the word, by appealing to the *contention of Paul and Barnabas*, &c., &c. 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 honour 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 ομοιοπαθεῖς ἄνθρωποι, *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, honour, and glory are due.

Verse 16. **Who in times past suffered all nations, &c.]** The words πάντα τα ἔθνη, 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 then 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 giving 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, #Ro 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 endeavoured 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, **#Ac 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 endeavoured 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 Clarke on "Ac 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 he proper meaning of the word in the text, in his Scholia upon the first canon of the apostles, *ὅν μὲν χειροτονία καλεῖται, 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 *χειροτονία*, *cheirotomia*, 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 *cheirotomia*; 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 *εκτείνειν τὰς χεῖρας*, *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 *cheirotomia* taken, which the fathers of the councils are found to have used, calling their suffrage *cheirotomia*.' St. Paul, #2Co

**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 *cheirotomia* 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 *cheirotomia* (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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 13:13".

Verse 25. **They went down into Attalia]** This was a sea-port town in Pamphylia. Thus we find the apostles travelled 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 travelled 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 #Ac 13:1, 2; and that they *fulfilled* that *work*: see in the same chapter, #Ac 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, **#Ro 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, **#2Co 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, &c., &c. 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 *labours* 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 labours 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!

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XV.

*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. XV.

Verse 1. **Except ye be circumcised, &c.]** 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, &c.]** 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, #Ga 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, #Ga 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 necessities 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, &c., &c.

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 #Ga 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, #Ac 9:26, and of his *second* in #Ac 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, &c., 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 laboured 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]** ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων, *From the days of old*: a phrase which simply signifies *some years ago*; and, if he here refers to the conversion of Cornelius, (see #Ac 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]** ὁ καρδιογνώστης θεός. We had this epithet of the Divine Being once before; see #Ac 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 μαρτυρεῖν 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, &c., 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, &c., 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 favour 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 honour.

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 fulfilment of declarations made by the prophets.

Verse 16. **After this I will return, and will build again, &c.]** These two verses, 16th and 17th, are quoted from **#Am 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,* הַנִּפְלֵה HANOPHELETH, *which is falling down.*" This is evidently a quotation from **#Am 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 יִדְרֵשׁוּ *yidreshu, they might seek*, instead of יִירֶשׁוּ *yireshu, they may possess*, where the whole difference between the two words is the change of the י *yod* for a ד *daleth*, which might be easily done; and they found אָדָם *adam, man, or men*, instead of אֶדוֹם *Edom, the Idumeans*, which differs from the other only by the insertion of ו *vau* between the two last letters. None of the MSS. collated by *Kennicott* and *De 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 γινωσκα ἀπ' αἰώνος doubtful, and has thrown ἐστι 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 laboured to find out the sense. Some very learned men, and particularly *Schleusner*, contend that the word γινωσκα, from γινωσκειν, *to know*, should be understood here in the same sense in which יָדָה *yada* is in many parts of the Old Testament, which not only signifies *to know*, but *to*



approve, love, &c. 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 **#Ac 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 **#Ge 9:4**, and for others detailed at the end of this chapter; but also all *cruelty*, *manslaughter*, *murder*, &c., 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 *εὐχομαι* 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, &c., 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 [A.S.], *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 **#Ac 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, &c.]** 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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 εργων*. "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, #Heb 10:24: *και κατανοωμεν αλληλους εις παροξυσμον αγαπης και καλων εργων* 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 #Heb 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, &c., &c. 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.

{See Ancillary Data for Clarke's Article on the precept concerning blood.}

## ACTS

### CHAPTER XVI.

*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. XVI.

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, &c.*

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 **#2Ti 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: **#1Ti 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 #Ga 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, #Ac 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 δοκεω, 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*, *Æolia*, 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, Æolia 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*, *Æthiopic*, *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 *Bounarbach*i, 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 endeavoured to go into Macedonia**] This is the first place that the historian St. Luke refers to himself: *we endeavoured*, &c. And, from this, it has been supposed that he joined the company of Paul, for the first time, at Troas.

**Assuredly gathering**] συμβιβάζοντες, 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, #Ac 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 *Ægean 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 Æmilius* 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 Æmilius, 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. Æmilius. 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 Cæsar, and afterwards enlarged by Augustus; the people, therefore, were considered as freemen of Rome, and, from this, call themselves *Romans*, #Ac 16:21. The Jewish definition of קִלְנִיָּא 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]** οὐ ἐνομιζετο προσευχῇ εἶναι, *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 **Clarke's note on "Lu 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]** εις προσευχην, *Into the proseucha*: see **Clarke on "Ac 16:13"**, and see **Clarke on "Lu 6:12"**. The article, την, is added here by ABCE, several others, *Origen* and *Theophylact*: thus makes the place more emphatic, and seems to determine the above meaning of προσευχην 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, δαίμονιον μαντικον, a *divining demon*; and it was evidently such a one that possessed this young woman, and which Paul expelled, **#Ac 16:18**. See on this subject, **Clarke's notes on "Le 19:31"**, and see **Clarke on "De 18:11"**.

**Brought her masters much gain by soothsaying]** μαντευουσην, *By divination*, or what we call *telling fortunes*. Our term *soothsaying* coming from the Anglo-Saxon [A.S.], *truth*; and [A.S.], *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, &c.]** 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 *Saviour*; Satan is *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, the *destroyer*. The sovereign *Saviour* 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, &c., &c.*

**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, &c., 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 clamour against them; and probably those who are here called *τους αρχοντας*, *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]** *στρατηγους*, *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]** *εθη*, 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 hæc solemnia nobis*

*Vana superstitio, veterumque ignara deorum,  
Imposuit.*

*Æn. viii. v. 185, &c.*

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 Chaldæi et Judæi 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, De 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, **#2Co 11:23**: *εν πληγαις 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 *fascies*, 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, &c.* 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 clamour against you."

Verse 40. **Entered into the house of Lydia]** This was the place of their residence while at Philippi: see **#Ac 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 innocence 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, **#Php 4:16**, and once to Corinth, **#2Co 11:9**, and long afterwards, when he was prisoner in Rome, **#Php 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.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XVII.

*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. XVII.

Verse 1. **Passed through Amphipolis]** This city was the metropolis of the first division of Macedonia, as made by Paulus Æmilius: see the note on **#Ac 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 *Thermæ*. 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, **#Ac 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 Saviour 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, προσλαβόμενοι δε οι ιουδαιοι. *But the Jews taking, &c.*, 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 ανδρας ποιηρους. 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 אגורי אורח ש' גויים agorioth 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 *sedition 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 most favoured 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 Cæsar]** 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]** ησαν ευγενεστεροι, *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 fulfilment 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 honourable 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 *valour* 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 αθηνη, 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: *οὐκ ἦν ἀλλοῦ τοσαῦτα εἶδεν εἰδωλα*. *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 PRÆSENTIBUS 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, &c.

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 babbler say?]** The word *σπερμολογος*, which we translate *babbler*, 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 **Clarke on "Ac 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*, &c., who had been thus honoured 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 neighbouring 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 απатаσθαι 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 αινιτιτται, 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 practise and recommend. See farther observations at the end of the chapter. **See Clarke "Ac 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, &c., &c.

**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 defence in the minds of his intelligent judges! (Ecumenius 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 του αγνωστου του 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*, &c. *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*, *αγνοουντες*, *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, **#Ac 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, &c.]** 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, Æthiopic, Vulgate, Itala, Clement*, and *Bede*, the word *αιματος*, *blood*, is omitted. *He hath made of one* (meaning Adam)



all nations of men; but *αἷμα*, *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, *Æn.* 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*, *Æthiopic*, 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 **#Ge 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 **#Ge 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 αὐτον, 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 εἰμεν, *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 *Phænomena*, the words quoted by St. Paul are to be found literatim, του γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμεν; but also *Cleanthus*, in whose *Hymn to Jupiter* the same words (ἐκ σου γὰρ γένος εἰμεν) 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.]** του γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμεν The *Phænomena* of *Aratus*, in which these words are found, begins thus:-

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδεποτ' ἀνδρες ἐώμεν  
Ἀρρητὸν· μέσται δὲ διὸς πασαι μὲν ἀγυιαί,  
Πασαὶ δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί· μέσθι δὲ θάλασσα,  
Καὶ λεμένες· παντὴ δὲ διὸς κεχρημέθα πάντες·  
ΤΟΥ ΓΑΡ ΚΑΙΓΕΝΟΣ ΕΣΜΕΝ· οὐδ' ἥπιος ἀνθρώποισι  
Δέξια 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 labour from above:  
Where signs unerring show when best the soil,  
By well-timed culture, shall repay our toil, &c., &c.



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, &c.]** 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 πασιν, 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 Saviour 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, #Mt 25:31, &c.; #Joh 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, &c.]** 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 **#Ac 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*, &c., &c., 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 *δεισιδαιμονεστερος*, from *δειδω*, *I fear*, and *δαιμων*, a *demon*, signifies, "greatly addicted to the worship of the invisible powers;" for, as the word *δαιμων* 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 *εὐλαβεια 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 *favour* 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 endeavoured 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 ἑλληνων 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: 1. "We are told that one effect of his preaching was, that he converted Dionysius the Areopagite, **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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, **#Lu 23:26; 20:20, 26**, and as it ought to have been here, in **#Ac 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, **#Ac 24:25**, and to Agrippa, **#Ac 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 endeavour to excite the passions. And again, in vi. 1, that *Athenis affectus movere etiam per præconem 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 *Athenæus*, 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, endeavouring 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 endeavour 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'œuvre 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 fervour 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 favour.

"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.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Paul, leaving Athens, comes to Corinth, meets with Aquila and Priscilla, and labours 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 Cæsarea, visits Antioch, Galatia, and Phrygia, 21-23. Account of Apollos and his preaching, 24-28.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. XVIII.

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 *Ægean* 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 Cæsar, 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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, *Judæos, 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, **#Ac 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, **#Ac 20:34**; nor at Corinth or other places, **#1Co 4:12**; **#2Co 9:8, 9**; **#1Th 3:8**; and this Paul did for a reason which he gives in **#2Co 11:9-12**. While he was at Corinth he was supplied, when his own labour 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 neighbours, 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 neighbours, 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 travellers 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*, &c., &c. 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, &c.

**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 labour in Achaia,

**#Ro 16:5**; and the family of *Stephanas* was the next; and then *Crispus* and *Caius*, or *Gaius*; all of whom the apostle himself baptized, **#1Co 1:14-16**. See **Clarke on "Ac 18:8"**.

Verse 5. **When Silas and Timotheus were come**] We have seen, **#Ac 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 **#1Th 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 laboured 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**] **συνειλετο 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 **#Ac 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. **συνειλετο**, 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**] **ἀντιτασσόμενων**, 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 Satanæ*, by Wagenseil.

**He shook his raiment**] This was an action similar to that of *shaking the dust of the feet*; see **Clarke on "Mt 10:14"**. See a parallel act, and its signification, in **#Ne 5:13**: *Also I SHOOK MY LAP, and said, So shall God SHAKE every man FROM HIS HOUSE and FROM his LABOUR; 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 labour no more with *you*; and, from henceforth, shall confine my labours 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 #Ac 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 #Ac 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 λυθρω τας 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 labours 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 #Ac 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, #Ac 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.]** ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, *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 λόγον*, 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 *Achæans*, 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]** ἀνθυπατευοντος, serving the office of ἀνθυπατος, or deputy: see **Clark's note on "Ac 13:7"**.

**Gallio]** This deputy, or proconsul, was eldest brother to the celebrated *Lucius Annæus 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 Annæus Novatus*; but, having been adopted in the family of *Gallio*, he took the name of *Lucius Junius Gallio*. He, and Annæus 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 *De 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. Præfat. ad Natural. Quæst.* 4. He was of the sweetest disposition, affable to all, and beloved by every man.

*Statius*, *Sylvar*. lib. ii. 7. ver. 30, Ode on the *Birthday of Lucan*, says not a little in his favour, 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 Clarke's note on "**Ac 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 **#Ac 18:8**; and that he was known either to have embraced Christianity, or to have favoured 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, **#1Co 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.]** *καὶ οὐδὲν τούτων θω γαλλίῳ ἐμέλειν*. *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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 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 favourable 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 shorn 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 *Æthiopic* and two *Latin* versions, instead of *κεῖραμενος*, *having shaved*, in the singular, appear to have read *κεῖραμενοι*, *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 her him, and a shorter passage to embark at *Cenchrea*, in order to go by the *Ægean* 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 **#Ac 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, &c., 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 theatre, 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 fulness 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 favourable 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*, *Æthiopic*, *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, **#Ac 19:1**, and spent three years with them, **#Ac 20:31**, extending and establishing the Church at that place.

Verse 22. **Landed at Cæsarea]** This must have been Cæsarea 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 *ἀναβαίνω*, *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, #Joh 7:8. But when his brethren were GONE UP, then WENT he also UP unto the feast, #Joh 7:10. There were certain Greeks-that CAME UP to worship, #Joh 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, #Ac 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*, &c. 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 *Cæsarea* is always to be understood Cæsarea 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 Clarke on "Ac 2:10".

**In order]** *καθ' ἑξῆς*, A word peculiar to St. Luke; see his Gospel, #Lu 1:3; 8:1; and his history of the Acts, #Ac 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 *κατά*, *according to*, and *ἐξ*, *order*, as opposed to *confusion*, indistinctness, &c. If St. Paul went up to Jerusalem at this time, which we are left to *infer*, for Luke has not expressed it, (#Ac 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 #Ac 9:26; his *second*, #Ac 11:30; his *third*, #Ac 15:4; and his *fourth*, #Ac 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 splendour.

**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, &c.* 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, **#1Co 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]** *ευτονως 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 *Cæsarea*, 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 favoured 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 endeavours 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!

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XIX.

*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. XIX.

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, &c.]** 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, #Mt 3:11; #Lu 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, &c.]** 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 #Ac 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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 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 αρχιερεως, 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 ιερεως, *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, &c.* 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, **#Mt 12:27. See Clark's note there; "Mt 12:27".**

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. chap. 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*, &c.; all indicate imposture. Magicians among the Jews were termed בַּעֲלֵי שֵׁם *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, &c.]** 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, &c*. Ephesus abounded with these. *Dio Cassius*, speaking of the Emperor *Adrian*, says, *ο αδριανος περιεργωτατος ην και μαντειαις και μαγγανειαις παντοδαπαις εχρητο*. "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, &c.*, 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 μιν παλαι στί· υστερον δε προσεθεσαν τινες απατεωνες και αλλα· φασι δε των πρωτων τα ονοματα, ταδε ΑΣΚΙΟΝ, ΚΑΤΑΣΚΙΟΝ, ΛΙΞ, ΤΕΤΡΑΞ, ΔΑΜΝΑΜΕΝΕΥΣ, ΑΙΣΙΟΝ· δηλοι δε, το μιν 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 AISION. 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 *αργυριον*, which we translate *piece of silver*, means a *shekel*, as that word is used **#Mt 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 7,500£.

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 *αργυριον*, 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 1*d.* 3*q*3/4., which answers to the *fourth* part of a *denarius*, rated by the same author at 7 3/4*d.* Allowing this to be the coin intended, the 50,000 *sestertii* would amount to 403£. 12*s.* 11*d.*

The Vulgate reads, *denariorum quinquaginta millium*, fifty thousand *denarii*, which, at 7 3/4 *d.*, will amount to 1,614£. 11*s.* 8*d.* 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 1£. 12*s.* 3 1/2*d.* 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, **#1Co 15:32**: *If I after the manner of men, have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, &c.* 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. See **Clarke "Ac 19:38"**

Verse 21. **Paul purposed in the spirit, &c.**] 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 **#1Co 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. (**#1Co 16:8**.) And he resolved, if possible, to see Rome, which had been the object of his wishes for a considerable time. See **#Ro 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, **#1Co 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, **#1Co 4:18**, and after that to return to him at Ephesus, **#1Co 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 **#Ro 16:23**. He was one of St. Paul's companions, and is mentioned as being left by the apostle at Corinth, **#2Ti 4:20**.

Verse 23. **No small stir about that way.**] Concerning the *Gospel*, which the apostles preached; and which is termed *this way*, **#Ac 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 *Musellus*, in the reigns of Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus Pius, &c. 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 ασιας 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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 ευπορια 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 labours 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 φυσις 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, &c: 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 theatre.]** 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 theatre 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 *theatre* at Agrigentum, observes, *ubi ex more Græcorum locus consultationi præbebatur*; 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 ασιάρχων*; 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 φίλοι*, *his friends*; and foreseeing that Paul would be exposed to great danger if he went into the theatre, 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? **#1Co 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 ἐκκλησία*; 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 δήμῳ*, *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, **#2Ti 4:14**, and whom, with *Philetus*, he was obliged to excommunicate, **#1Ti 1:20**. By *the Jews putting him forward*, we are to understand their earnestness to get him to undertake *their defence*, 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**] *ὁ γραμματεὺς*, 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: 1. 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, **#Ac 19:35, 36**. 2. That the persons accused were not guilty of any public offence, nor of any breach of the laws of the city, **#Ac 19:37**. 3. That, if they were, this was not a legal method of prosecuting them, **#Ac 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, **#Ac 19:40**. See *Dodd*.

**Is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana]** The word *νεωκορος*, *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 honour 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 *Clarke on "Ac 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]** *ῥεσυλους*; 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 endeavoured 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*, ἀγοραῖοι ἀγούται; 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*, ἀνθυπατοί, *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*, ἐν τῇ ἐννομῷ ἐκκλησίᾳ, one legally constituted, and properly authorized to hear and determine on the subject.

Verse 40. **For we are in danger, &c.]** 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 cætum 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.]** τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. Another proof that the word ἐκκλησία, 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*.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XX.

*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 Cæsarea, in order to go to Jerusalem, 16-38.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XX.

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, #1Co 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, #Ac 20:1, in which he informs us, #2Co 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, #2Co 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, #1Co 16:5. This was his *third* voyage to that city, #2Co 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 Jews 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, **#Ac 20:5**.

**Into Asia]** *αχρὶ τῆς ασίας*; These words are wanting in two MSS., *Erpen*, the *Æthiopic*, *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, **#Ac 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, **#Ro 16:21**. ADE, more than twenty others, with the *Coptic*, *Armenian*, later *Syriac* in the margin, *Vulgate*, *Itala*, *Theophylact*, *Origen*, and *Bede*, add *πυρρῶν*, *Sopater the SON OF PYRRHUS*. Griesbach has received this into his text.

**Aristarchus of Thessalonica]** This person occurs in **#Ac 19:29**, and is mentioned there as a *Macedonian*. He attended Paul in his journey to Rome, **#Ac 27:2**, and was his *fellow labourer*, **#Phm 1:24**, and his *fellow prisoner*, **#Col 4:10, 11**. *Secundus* is mentioned nowhere but in this place.

**Gaius of Derbe]** This is supposed to be the same who is mentioned **#Ac 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, **#1Co 1:14**, and entertained him as his *host* while he abode there, **#Ro 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, **#Ac 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*, **#Eph 6:21, 22**. He sent him for the same purpose, and with the same commendations, to the Colossians, **#Col 4:7, 8**. Paul seems also to have designed him to



superintend the Church at Crete in the absence of Titus; see #**Tit 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, #**Ac 21:29**. He had, no doubt, travelled with him on other journeys, for we find, by #**2Ti 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 #**Ac 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 #**Ex 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*, #**Ac 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, #**Ac 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]** ἐπέπεσεν αὐτῷ, Stretched himself upon him, in the same manner as Elisha did on the Shunammite's son, #2Ki 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]** ὁμιλήσας, Having *familiarly conversed*, for this is the import of the word, which is very different from the διελέγετο, of the *seventh* verse, and the διαλεγόμενου, 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]** ἀναλαμβάνειν, *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, #Ac 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 *Ægean 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 τρωγυλίου 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 *Mæander*.

**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*, #Ac 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 #Ac 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 #Ac 20:31, though the time assigned by it is too long.

Verse 19. **Serving the Lord with all humility, &c.]** 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, #Ac 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, #Ac 19:8-10, and only left their synagogues when he found, through their obstinacy, he could do them no good.

**Repentance toward God, &c.]** 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 favour 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]** τονδρομον μου, *My ministerial function*. We have already met with this word in application to the same subject, #Ac 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*, *Æthiopic*, *Vulgate*, and some of the *fathers*. If we consider them as genuine they may imply thus much: that the apostle wished to fulfil 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 **#Php 1:25-27; 2:24; #Phm 1:22; #Heb 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 *favour*, that might be beneficial to your souls. This is properly the meaning of the original word. **See Clarke's note on "Ac 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 **#Isa 9:6**, Jesus Christ is called the *wonderful counsellor*, אֵלֶּיךָ פֶּלֶאֱמֵי *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 fulfil 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 honoured 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 #Ac 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. *ἐκκλησιαν 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, Æthiopia, 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 *αιμα* 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 favour of *του κυριου*, 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, &c.]** 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*, #Re 1:2, 6. The same sect, with other false teachers, infested the Church of *Pergamos*, and preached there the doctrine of *Balaam*, #Re 2:14, 15. A false prophetess seduced the Church of *Thyatira*, #Re 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 #Ac 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*, &c., of this building. Let us observe the order of these things: 1. 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, &c.]** 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, #1Sa 12:3-5.

Verse 34. **These hands have ministered, &c.]** 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*, &c.

**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 endeavour 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, **#Eze 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.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Paul and his company sail from Miletus, and come to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara, 1. Finding a Phœnician 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 Cæsarea, 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 endeavour 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. XXI.

Verse 1. **Came with a straight course]** Having had, as is necessarily implied, *wind* and *tide* in their favour.

**Coos]** An island in the Archipelago, or Ægean Sea, one of those called the *Sporades*. It was famous for the worship of Æsculapius 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. **Phœnicia]** A part of Syria. See **Clarke's note on "Ac 11:19"**.

Verse 3. **Cyprus]** See **Clarke's note on "Ac 4:36"**, and see the *track* of this journey on the *map*.

**Tyre]** A city of Phœnicia, one of the most celebrated maritime towns in the world. See **Clarke's notes on "Ac 12:20"**; and see **Clarke "Mt 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, &c." 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, **#1Sa 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, &c., 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, &c.; 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 cœlum mittunt. *Tertul. de Jejuniis*.

Verse 6. **Taken-leave]** *απαλαμεινολ*; *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 Cæsarea, 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, **#Jud**

**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 του παυλον*. This clause is wanting in ABCE, and many others; the *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, *Armenian*, &c.

**Came unto Cæsarea**] This was Cæsarea of *Palestine*, already sufficiently described, see **Clarke on "Ac 8:40"**.

**Philip the evangelist**] One of the seven deacons, who seems to have settled here after he had baptized the eunuch. See **Clarke on "Ac 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 **#Ac 2:17, 18**, of this book. If Philip's daughters might be *prophetesses*, why not *teachers*?

Verse 10. **Agabus.**] See **Clarke's note on "Ac 11:28"**.

Verse 11. **Took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands, &c.**] 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. **#Jer 13:4**. For more examples of this figurative or symbolical prophesying, see **#Jer 27:2, 3; 28:4; #Isa 20:1-6; #Eze 4:1-17; 12:1-28, &c.**

**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 **#Ac 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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 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, &c.**] 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 Cæsarea, 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 Cæsarea, met the disciples, and invited them to lodge with him while they were at Jerusalem; and, having transacted his business at Cæsarea, 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 #Ac 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, &c.**] 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**] ποσὰι μυριάδες; 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, &c.**] 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, **see Clarke on "Nu 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, *ναζαραιων ζυρασθαι διεταξε μαλα συχρους*, *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, &c., were the expenses on this occasion. See the notes on **#Nu 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 favours 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 **#Ac 15:1-21**, and the additional observations at the end of that chapter. **See Clarke "Ac 15:41"**

Verse 26. **To signify the accomplishment, &c.]** *διαγγελλων*, *Declaring* the accomplishment, &c. 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 Clarke's note on "Nu 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, **#Ac 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.' **#1Co 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, **#Ro 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, &c.]** As much as if they had said: This is the man concerning whom we wrote to you; who in every place endeavours 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 succour 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 honour 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 **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 12:6"**.

Verse 35. **And when he came upon the stairs]** Those mentioned in the note on **#Ac 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 Clarke on "Lu 23:18", and see Clarke "Joh 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 #Ac 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, ἑλληνιστὶ 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, &c.**] 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 Δ delta, *four*, for Λ 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?**] Σικαριῶν: *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 Clarke's note on "Ac 7:2".

**Of Tarsus-no mean city]** In Clarke's notes on "Ac 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 Cæsar 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, *πολιν μεγάλην και ευδαιμονα*, *a great and flourishing city*. JOSEPHUS, *Ant.* lib. i. cap. 6, sec. 6, says that it was *παρ' αυτοις των πολεων η αξιολογωτατη μητροπολις ουσα*, *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 Æneas, 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 endeavour to prevent us from bearing a necessary and most honourable cross. See #Ac 21:12, 13. It should, therefore, be kept within *Scriptural* bounds.



# ACTS

## CHAPTER XXII.

*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 clamour 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. XXII.

Verse 1. **Men, brethren, and fathers]** A Hebrew form of expression for *brethren and fathers*: for two classes only are addressed. **See Clarke's note on "Ac 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, &c.]** 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 Clarke's notes on "Ac 9:11"; and see Clarke "Ac 21:39".

**Feet of Gamaliel]** See a full account of this man in Clarke's note on "Ac 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 De 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 #Ac 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 φοην

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 αι τω δυναμενω λαμβανειν, *ante pedes id temper et prope est, illi qui accipere potest*. Also Lucian, *De Conser. Hist.* p. 669, ων παρα ποδας οι ελεγχολι. The refutation of which is at hand. The same kind of form occurs in the Hebrew, #Ex 11:8: All the people that are at *thy feet*, ברגליך *beragleica*, i.e. who are *with thee, under thy command*, #2Sa 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 extinct manner*, is evident; and hence, in #Ac 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 honour 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 Clarke on "Ac 9:2"*.

**Binding and delivering into prisons]** See Clarke on "Ac 8:3"; and see Clarke "Ac 9:2".

Verse 5. **The high priest doth bear me witness, &c.]** 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.

Verses 6. - 13. **As I made my journey, &c.]** See the whole of this account, and all the particular circumstances, considered at large in **Clarke's notes on "Ac 9:1"**, &c., and the observations at the conclusion of that chapter. **See Clarke "Ac 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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 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, &c.]** 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, **#Ac 9:25, 26**, and **#Ga 1:18**.

**I was in a trance]** This circumstance is not mentioned any where else, unless it be that to which himself refers in **#2Co 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 Clarke on "**Ac 7:58**"; and see Clarke "**Ac 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, Phœnicia, Arabia, Syria, Cilicia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Phrygia, Macedonia, Greece, Asia*, the *Isles of the Mediterranean Sea*, the *Isles of the Ægean Sea, Italy*, and some add *Spain* and even *Britain*. This was the *diocess* of this primitive bishop: none of the apostles travelled, none preached, none laboured 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*, **#De 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, **#2Sa 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 *Antinæ*, 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 *defence* 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, &c.]** They were going to tie him to a post, that they might scourge him.

**Is it lawful, &c.]** The Roman law absolutely forbade the *binding* of a Roman citizen. See Clarke's note on "Ac 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 Cæsar. 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 born free. But that the city of Tarsus had such privileges appears extremely probable. In **#Ac 21:39**, Paul says he was *born at Tarsus in Cilicia*, and in **#Ac 22:28**, he says he was *free born*; and, at **#Ac 22:26**, he calls himself a *Roman*; as he does also **#Ac 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, *De 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 Cæsari 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 Cæsar, and afterwards to Augustus, the former caused their city to be called *Juliopolis*." The Greek text is as follows:- οὕτω προσφίλως τῷ καίσαρι προτέρῳ, καὶ δι' ἐκεῖνον τῷ δευτέρῳ, οἱ τάρσεις εἶχον, ὥστε καὶ ἰουλιόπολιν σφας ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μετονομασαι. To which I add, that PHILO, de Virt. vol. ii. p. 587, edit. Mang., makes Agrippa say to Caligula, φίλων ἐνίων πατρίδας ὅλας τῆς ῥωμαικῆς ἡξίωσας πολιτείας· *You have made whole countries, to which your friends belong, to be citizens of Rome*. See Clarke's note on "Ac 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 #Ac 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 Prætozem, 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 Prætor, 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, *quæ sæpe multis in ultimis terris opem inter barbaros et salutem tulit*, &c. 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, &c.

PLUTARCH likewise, in his *Life of Pompey*, (vol. iii. p. 445, edit. Bryan,) says, concerning the behaviour 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 *Æthiopic*, *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 clamour, 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 labour to transmit them to posterity *improved* rather than *impaired*." This should be an article in the creed of every genuine *Briton*.



CHAPTER XXIII.

*Paul defending himself before the high priest, he commands him to be smitten on the mouth, 1, 2. Paul sharply reproves him, and, being reproved 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 favour, 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 Cæsarea, to Felix, and with him a letter, stating the circumstances of the case, 23-33. They arrive at Cæsarea, and Felix promises him a hearing when his accusers shall come down, 34, 35.*

NOTES ON CHAP. XXIII.

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 labour 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 *Æthiopic*. 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, **#Ac 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, &c., and all this they did that they might obtain happiness in the present life. See the account of the Pharisees and Sadducees, #Mt 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*, &c. 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, Æthiopic, 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, &c.]** 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, **#Pr 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 sævitiam ac libidinem jus regum 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 #Ac 24:24. He was an unrighteous governor; a base, mercenary, and bad man: see #Ac 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.]** εἰπὼν, *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 honour of his father *Antipater*. It was situated between Joppa and Cæsarea, on the road from Jerusalem to this latter city. Josephus says it was fifty *stadia* from Joppa. The distance between Jerusalem and Cæsarea 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 Cæsarea 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 Clarke on "Ac 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.]** ἐν τῷ πραιτωρίῳ, *In Herod's prætorium*, so called because it was built by Herod the Great. The prætorium was the place where the Roman *prætor* 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 preceeding 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 dishonour 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 XXIV.

*After five days, Ananias the high priest, the elders, and one Tertullus, an orator, come to Cæsarea to accuse Paul, 1. The oration of Tertullus, 2-9. Paul's defence, 10-21. Felix, having heard his defence, 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. XXIV.

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 **#Ac 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, **#Ac 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 Cæsarea. *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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 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; &c., 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, **#Ac 24:2-4**; The *proposition* is contained in **#Ac 24:5**. The *narration* and *conclusion*, in **#Ac 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 **#Ac 21:38**. He had also quelled a very afflictive disturbance which took place between the *Syrians* and the *Jews of Cæsarea*. 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 endeavoured 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 endeavour 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, &c.]** 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. 4. He has endeavoured 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 *Æcumenius*, 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 ναζωραιων αιρεσεως, of the heresy of the Nazarenes.* This word is used six times by St. Luke; viz. in *this* verse, and in #Ac 24:14, and in #Ac 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 5:17", where the subject is largely considered; and see farther on #Ac 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, #Ac 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, &c.]** 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 favour. 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 *defence* 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 favourable

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 שׁפֶטֶט *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 favour, 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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 5:17"**, and see before, **#Ac 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* αῖρεσιν, *sect*, or *heresy of their religion*. And Josephus, who was a Pharisee, speaks, τῆς τῶν φαρισαίων αῖρεσεως, *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 **#Ac 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 endeavouring 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, &c.]** 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 behaviour; 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 offence 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, &c.]** 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 Clarke on "Ac 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 Clarke on "Ac 21:33".** *And that he should forbid none of his acquaintance, τῶν ἰδίων*, 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 **#Ac 12:1**, &c. 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 **#Ac 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 **Clarke's note on "Ac 24:21"**, that he might be the more accurately instructed in the doctrines, views, &c., of the Christians.

Verse 25. **As he reasoned of righteousness]** **δικαιοσύνης**; 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]** **εγκρατείας**, *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, **#Ac 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

defence. 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 Cæsarea.

**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, &c., 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 Cæsarea 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*.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XXV.

*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 Cæsarea, 4, 5. Festus, having tarried at Jerusalem about ten days, returns to Cæsarea, 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 Cæsar, 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 Cæsar, 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. XXV.

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 Cæsarea, 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 *colour 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 Cæsarea]** It is truly astonishing that Festus should refuse this favour 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 Cæsarea; 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]** *οι δυνατοι*, *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 Cæsarea, 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, &c., they no doubt invented some *new* charges, such as *sedition*, *treason*, &c., 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 Cæsar, 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 Cæsar'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 Cæsarea, 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 Cæsar'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 *favour*, *χαριν*, from Festus, that he would send Paul to Jerusalem, #Ac 25:3. Festus, willing to do the Jews *χαριν*, this *favour*, asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged, #Ac 25:9. Paul says, I have done nothing amiss, either against the Jews or against Cæsar; therefore no man *με δυναται αυτοις χαρισασθαι*, *can make a PRESENT of me to them*; that is, *favour* them so far as to put my life into their hands, and thus *gratify* them by my death. Festus, in his address to Agrippa, #Ac 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*, &c. Much of the beauty of this passage is lost by not attending to the original words. **See Clarke on "Ac 25:16"**.

**I appeal unto Cæsar.]** 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 iudex 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 Cæsar. *Lege Julia de vi publica damnatur, qui aliqua potestate præditus, Civem Romanum ad Imperatorem appellantem 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 amentiaë, 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 Cæsar.

Verse 12. **Conferred with the council]** From this circumstance, we may learn that the appeal of Paul to Cæsar 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 Cæsar." 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 Cæsar.

**Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar, &c.]** Rather, *Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar, and to Cæsar 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 #Ac 12:1. Upon the death of his father's youngest brother, Herod, he succeeded him in the kingdom of Chalcis, by the favour 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 Peræa, *Tarichæa* 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 #Ac 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 incestæ, 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 rumours of her

becoming empress-propterque insignem reginæ 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, invitum 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]** *χαρίζεσθαι τινα ανθρωπον,* To MAKE A PRESENT of any man; gratuitously to give up the life of any man, through favour or caprice. Here is a reference to the subject discussed on **#Ac 25:11.**

**Before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, &c.]** 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 *De Præsid. 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 δικαγια.* "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 *favour*, 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 *favoured* country, are no *arbitrary imprisonments*-no *Bastiles*-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 Cæsarea, 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 defence, 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 ιδίας δεισιδαιμονιας*; *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 **#Ac 17:34**.

**And of one Jesus, which was dead, &c.]** 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*, get 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, **#Lu 23:8**.

As Herod, the father of this Agrippa, had been so active an instrument in endeavouring 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 splendour, 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 Cæsar. 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 *κύριος*, *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, &c.]** 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 Cæsar. 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 **#Ac 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 Cæsar, 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 endeavoured 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.



# ACTS

## CHAPTER XXVI.

*Paul answers for himself before Agrippa, to whom he pays a true compliment, in order to secure a favourable 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. XXVI.

Verse 1. **Then Paul stretched forth the hand]** This act, as we have already seen on **#Ac 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 favour, 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 Clarke on "Ac 25:13"**.

Verse 4. **My manner of life, &c.]** 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 Clarke on "Lu 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 **#Ac 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, &c., and to which, he says, #Ac 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 #Php 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 **Clarke's notes on "Ac 9:2"**, &c.

Verse 16. **But rise, &c.**] The particulars mentioned here, and in the two following verses, are not given in #Ac 9:1-9, nor in #Ac 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, see **Clarke "Joh 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, &c., 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, αφεις 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 αφεις 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 neighbouring parts of Arabia Deserta, for about three years; and afterwards he went up to Jerusalem. See #Ga 1:17, 18; and see Clarke's note on "Ac 9:23".

**That they should repent]** Be deeply humbled for their past iniquities, and *turn to God* as their Judge and Saviour, 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 Clarke's note on "Mt 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 #Ac 25:8; and see Calmet.

Verse 22. **Having-obtained help of God]** According to the gracious promise made to him: see #Ac 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 **#Ac 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 **#Isa 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, **#Isa 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 πολλὰ 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 **#Ac 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, &c., &c., 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.] αληθείας και σωφροσύνης,** Words of *truth and of mental soundness*. The very terms used by the apostle would at once convince Festus that he was mistaken. The σωφροσύνη of the apostle was elegantly opposed to the μανία 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 **Ac 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, &c.] 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 I am, except *these* BONDS! The whole council say-This man hath done nothing worthy of death nor of BONDS! *Δεσμων*, 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, &c.]** 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 Cæsar; 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 **#Ac 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 **#Ac 27:3, 43**. And the same may be gathered from **#Ac 28:14, 16**. So that this defence of the apostle before Agrippa, Bernice, Festus, &c., 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.

# ACTS

## CHAPTER XXVII.

*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 favourable 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. XXVII.

Verse 1. **And when it was determined**, &c.] 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 *Ægean 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, **#Ac 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, **#Ac 20:4**. Now, accompanying him to Rome, he was there a *fellow prisoner* with him, **#Col 4:10**, and is mentioned in St. Paul's epistle to Philemon, **#Phm 1:24**, 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 **#Col 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 Clarke's notes on "Mt 11:21"; and see Clarke "Ac 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 Clarke on "Ac 4:36".

Verse 5. **Pamphylia]** See Clarke on "Ac 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*, ἐπὶ μετεώρου 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 #Ac 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 **#Le 16:29; 23:27**, &c. 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**, &c.] 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**] *τω κυβερνητη*, the *pilot*; and owner of the ship, *τω ναυκληρω*, 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 Phœnice**] It appears that the *Fair Havens* were at the *eastern* end of the island, and they wished to reach *Phœnice*, which lay farther towards the *west*.

**Toward the south-west and north-west.**] *κατα λιβα και κατα χωρον*. The *libs* certainly means the *south-west*, called *libs*, from *Libya*, from which it blows to. wards the Ægean 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 favourable, 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, #Ac 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 Claudia*, #Ac 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*, #Ac 27:27, and afterwards broken to pieces, #Ac 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.*  
 Æn. 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,  
Cædere deinde jubet.  
Æn. 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; #Jon 1:16*. See Shaw's Travels, 4to. 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 forecabin; 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 honourable 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 forecabin, 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]** εις την 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, **#Ac 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 **#Ac 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, &c.

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 υπορχουσης*. 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, #Ac 27:34-38. The vessel was a *corn vessel*; and they had not as yet thrown the *wheat* into the sea, see #Ac 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, &c.

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*: #Ac 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 fulfilment, 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 Clarke's note on "Ac 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, &c.

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: *σημαινει 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 Clarke's notes on "Ac 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]** *κόλπον*, *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*, #Ac 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*, *ζευκτηρίας*, 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 *bowspirit*; 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 #Ac 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, &c.]** 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, &c., 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*, #Ac 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 where they would be.

1. PAUL had appealed to Cæsar; 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 honour 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 endeavours of men.

4. God fulfils his promises, and conceals his almighty power, under such means and endeavours 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*.



# ACTS

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*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, &c., 7, 8. He heals several others also, who honour 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. XXVIII.

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 Phœnicians, 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 מִלִּיטָה *Meliteh*, escape or refuge, from מָלַט *malat*, to escape.

The *Phæacians* were probably the *first* inhabitants of this island: they were expelled by the *Phœnicians*; the Phœnicians 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 favour 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 **#Ac 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, (**#Ac 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, **#Ac 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 *Phœnicians*, 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 *Phœnician 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]

[Samaritan MSS. majuscule]

[Samaritan MSS. majuscule]

[Samaritan MSS. majuscule]

*Chadar Beth olam kabar Chanibaal  
 Nakeh becaleth haveh, rach-  
 m dæh Am beshuth Chanibaal 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 Phœnicians, 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 **#1Co 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 Phœnicians, formed this word from their observing that the Phœnicians 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*, &c. 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 Phœnicians, 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*, &c., 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 θηρια 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 *Dikê*, 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,  
Κυδινη τ' αιδοιη τε θεοις, οι ολυμπον εχουσιν·  
Και ρ' οποτ' αν τις μιν βλαπτη σκολιως ονοταζων  
Αυτικα παρ διι 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 **Clarke's notes on "Nu 21:6"**.

**Said that he was a god.]** As *Hercules* was one of the gods of the Phœnicians, 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:-

*Α. Κ. υιος, 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, &c., 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 honours]** 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 **#1Ti 5:17**. *Let the elders which rule well be accounted worthy of double HONOUR*, *τιμης*, which St. Chrysostom, on the place, explains thus: *την των αναγκαιων χορηγίαν* 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 **#1Co 6:20**; and **#1Co 7:23**. And in the Septuagint, **#Nu 22:17**; compared with **#Nu 22:18**; **#Ps 8:5**; and **#Ps 49:12**; **#Pr 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 *pro*w 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*. *Æneid*, x. ver. 166:-

*Massicus ærata princeps secat æquora TIGRI.*

"Massicus, chief, cuts the waves in the brazen-beaked TIGER."

Of another called the *Chimera*. *Æn.* v. ver. 118, 223:-

*Ingentemque Gyas ingenti mole CHIMÆRAM.*

"Gyas the vast Chimera's bulk commands."



And of another called the *Centaur*. Æn. v. ver. 122, 155, 157:-

—————CENTAURUS *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 succour; 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 læti 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 valour 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]** ὅθεν 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 æra. 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 *courtezans*, 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 defence.

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*, #Ac 2:5, but there were *strangers of Rome* also, #Ac 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, &c. 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 *Cæsarilla 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 Herculeus*, 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*, &c., which are formed of *beams*, *planks*, *boards*, and the like; and therefore me may consider it as implying, either a *temporary* residence, or some *mean building*, such as a *cottage*, &c. And in this sense Horace evidently uses it, Carm. lib. i. Od. iv. ver. 13:-

*Pallida mors æquo 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 Tabernæ*, 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 **#Ro 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]** στρατοπεδάρχῃ. 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 στρατοπεδάρχης, 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. *Vinctus mitti ad præfectos prætorii 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, #Ac 12:6.

Verse 17. **Paul called the chief of the Jews together]** We have already seen, in #Ac 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, &c.]** 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 #Ac 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, &c.]** 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 Clarke's note on "**Ac 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, &c.]** 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 **#Isa 6:9**.

Verse 26. **Hearing ye shall hear, &c.]** See the notes on **#Mt 13:14**, and **#Joh 12:39, 40**.

Verse 28. **The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles]** St. Paul had spoken to this effect twice before, **#Ac 13:46**, and **#Ac 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 favour was showed him, and he was permitted to dwell alone, with the soldier that guarded him, **#Ac 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 labour. 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, **#Php 1:12, 13**; and we find that there were several *saints*, even in *Cæsar's household*, **#Php 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 **#Php 1:12, 13; 2:25; 4:15, 16, 18, &c.**

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 **Clarke's note on "Mt 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 κυριος**, 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 Saviour*; 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 **#Joh 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]** *παρησιας*, *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 **#Phm 1:23, 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 **#Ac 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 pretence 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 *Aquæ Salviæ*, 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 *certainly*.

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 traveller of the illustrious Apostle Paul-By the holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, &c. &c.*

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 Æthiopic.-ÆTHIOPIC.*

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 favour; 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 #Ac 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 favour 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 favour 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 Saviour, 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 Saviour 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, behaviour 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.



## PREFACE TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THAT ST. PAUL was the author of this epistle, and that it possesses every evidence of *authenticity* that any work of the kind can possess, or that even the most fastidious skepticism can require, has been most amply proved by Dr. W. Paley, Archdeacon of Carlisle, in his work entitled "*Horæ Paulinæ*; or, the Truth of the Scripture History of St. Paul evinced, by a comparison of the Epistles which bear his name with the Acts of the Apostles, and with one another."

Of this apostle I have spoken at large in the notes on the preceding book, and especially in the observations at the close of the ninth chapter, to which I beg leave to refer the reader. It will be sufficient to state here, that Saul, (afterwards called *Paul*,) was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, of Jewish parents, who possessed the right of Roman citizens; (see the note on #**Ac 22:28**;) that, when young, he was sent to Jerusalem for the purpose of receiving a Jewish education; that he was there put under the tuition of the famous Rabbi *Gamaliel*, and was incorporated with the sect of the Pharisees, of whose system he imbibed all the pride, self-confidence, and intolerance; and distinguished himself as one of the most inveterate enemies of the Christian cause; but, being converted by a most singular interposition of Divine Providence and grace, he became one of the most zealous promoters and successful defenders of the cause which he had before so inveterately persecuted.

Though this epistle is directed *to the Romans*, yet we are not to suppose that *Romans*, in the proper sense of the word, are meant; but rather those who *dwelt at Rome*, and composed the Christian Church in that city: that there were among these *Romans*, properly such, that is heathens who had been converted to the Christian faith, there can be no doubt; but the principal part of the Church in that city seems to have been formed from *Jews*, sojourners at Rome, and from such as were *proselytes* to the Jewish religion.

*When*, or by *whom*, the Gospel was first preached at Rome cannot be ascertained. Those who assert that St. *Peter* was its founder, can produce no solid reason for the support of their opinion. Had this apostle first preached the Gospel in that city, it is not likely that such an event would have been unnoticed in the *Acts of the Apostles*, where the labours of St. Peter are particularly detailed with those of St. Paul, which indeed form the chief subject of this book. Nor is it likely that the author of this epistle should have made no reference to this circumstance, had it been true. Those who say that this Church was founded by these two apostles conjointly, have still less reason on their side; for it is evident, from #**Ro 1:8**, &c., that St. Paul had *never been at Rome* previously to his writing this epistle. It is most likely that no *apostle* was employed in this important work, and that the Gospel was first preached there by some of those persons who were converted at Jerusalem on the day of pentecost; for we find, from #**Ac 2:10**, that there were at Jerusalem *strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes*; and these, on their return, would naturally declare the wonders they had witnessed, and proclaim that truth by which they themselves had received salvation. Of ROME

itself, then the metropolis of the world, a particular account has been given in the note on **#Ac 28:16**; to which the reader is requested to refer.

The *occasion* of writing this epistle may be easily collected from the epistle itself. It appears that St. Paul had been made acquainted with all the circumstances of the Christians at Rome, by Aquila and Priscilla, (see **#Ro 16:3**;) and by other Jews who had been expelled from Rome by the decree of Claudius, (mentioned **#Ac 18:2**;) and, finding that they consisted partly of *heathens* converted to Christianity, and partly of *Jews* who had, with many remaining prejudices, believed in Jesus as the true Messiah, and that many contentions arose from the claims of the Gentile converts to equal privileges with the Jews, and from the absolute refusal of the Jews to admit these claims unless the Gentile converts became circumcised, he wrote to adjust and settle these differences.

Dr. Paley, with his usual perspicuity, has shown that the principal object of the argumentative part of the epistle is "to place the Gentile convert upon a parity of situation with the Jewish, in respect of his religious condition, and his rank in the Divine favour." The epistle supports this point by a variety of arguments; such as, that no man of either description was justified by the works of the law-or this plain reason, that no man had performed them; that it became therefore necessary to appoint *another medium*, or condition of justification, in which *new medium* the Jewish peculiarity was merged and lost; that Abraham's own justification was *antecedent* to the law, and *independent of it*; that the Jewish converts were to consider the law as now dead, and themselves as married to another; that what the law in truth could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God had done by sending his Son; that God had rejected the unbelieving Jews, and had substituted in their place a society of believers in Christ, collected indifferently from Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, in an epistle directed to Roman believers, the point to be endeavoured after by St. Paul was to reconcile the Jewish converts to the opinion that the Gentiles were admitted by God to a parity of religious situation with themselves, and that without their being obliged to keep the law of Moses. In this epistle, though directed to the Roman Church in general, it is, in truth, a Jew writing to Jews. Accordingly, as often as his argument leads him to say any thing derogatory from the Jewish institution, he constantly follows it by a softening clause. Having, **#Ro 2:28, 29**, pronounced "that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor that circumcision which is outward in the flesh," he adds immediately, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there in circumcision? *Much every way.*" Having in **#Ro 3:28**, brought his argument to this formal conclusion, "that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law," he presently subjoins, **#Ro 3:31**, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! *Yea, we establish the law.*" In the seventh chapter, when in **#Ro 7:6** he had advanced the bold assertion, "that now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held;" in the next verse he comes in with this healing question, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid! Nay, I had not known sin but by the law." Having, in the following words, more than insinuated the inefficacy of the Jewish law, **#Ro 8:3**: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh;" after a digression indeed, but that sort of a digression which he could never resist, a rapturous contemplation of his Christian hope, and which occupies the latter part of this chapter; we find him in the next, as if sensible that he had said something which would give offence, returning to his Jewish brethren in terms of the warmest affection and respect: "I say the truth in Christ Jesus, I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could

wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers; and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." When, in the 31st and 32d verses of the ninth chapter, he represented to the Jews the error of even the best of their nation, by telling them that "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, had not attained to the law of righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone;" he takes care to annex to this declaration these conciliating expressions: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved; for I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Lastly, having, **#Ro 10:20, 21**, by the application of a passage in Isaiah, insinuated the most ungrateful of all propositions to a Jewish ear, the rejection of the Jewish nation as God's peculiar people; he hastens, as it were, to qualify the intelligence of their fall by this interesting exposition: "I say then, hath God cast away his people, (i.e. wholly and entirely?) God forbid! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew;" and follows this throughout the whole of the eleventh chapter, in a series of reflections calculated to soothe the Jewish converts, as well as to procure from their Gentile brethren respect to the Jewish institution. Dr. Paley, drawing an argument from this manner of writing, in behalf of the genuineness of this epistle, adds, "Now all this is perfectly natural. In a *real* St. Paul writing to *real* converts, it is what anxiety to bring them over to his persuasion would naturally produce; but there is an *earnestness* and a *personality*, if I may so call it, in the manner, which a cold forgery, I apprehend, would neither have conceived nor supported." *Horæ Paulinæ*, p. 49, &c.

From a proper consideration of the *design* of the apostle in writing this epistle, and from the *nature* and *circumstances* of the persons to whom it was directed, much light may be derived for a proper understanding of the epistle itself. When the reader considers that the Church at Rome was composed of *heathens* and *Jews*, that the latter were taught to consider themselves the only people on earth to whom the Divine favour extended; that *these* alone had a right to all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; that the giving *them* the law and the prophets, which had not been given to any other people, was the fullest proof that these privileges did not extend to the nations of the earth; and that, though it was possible for the Gentiles to be saved, yet it must be *in consequence* of their becoming *circumcised*, and taking on them the *yoke of the law*:-when, on the other hand, the reader considers the Roman Gentiles, who formed the other part of the Church at Rome, as educated in the most perfect contempt of *Judaism* and of the *Jews*, who were deemed to be haters of all mankind, and degraded with the silliest superstitions, and now evidently rejected and abandoned by that God in whom they professed to trust; it is no wonder if, from these causes, many contentions and scandals arose, especially at a time when the spirit of Christianity was but little understood, and among a people, too, who do not appear to have had any apostolic authority established among them to compose feuds and settle religious differences.

That the apostle had these things particularly in his eye is evident from the epistle itself. His first object is to confound the *pride* of the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*; and this he does by showing the *former* that they had *broken their own law*, and, consequently, *forfeited* all the privileges which the obedient had a right to expect. He shows the *latter* that, however they might boast of eminent men, who had been an honour to their country, nevertheless, the Gentiles, *as a people*, were degraded by the basest

of crimes, and the lowest idolatry; that, in a word, the Gentiles had as little cause to boast in their *philosophers* as the Jews had to boast in the faith and piety of their *ancestors*; "for all had sinned and come short of the glory of God." This subject is particularly handled in the *five* first chapters, and often referred to in other places.

Concerning the *time* in which this epistle was written, there is not much difference of opinion: it is most likely that it was written about A. D. 58, when Paul was at Corinth: see **#Ro 16:23**, conferred with **#1Co 1:14**; and **#Ro 16:1**, conferred with **#2Ti 4:20**. It appears, from **#Ro 16:22**, that Paul did not write this epistle with his *own* hand, but used a person called *Tertius* as his amanuensis; and that it was sent by the hands of *Phoebe*, a deaconess, (*δια φοιβης της διακονου*,) of the Church of Cenchrea, which was the eastern port on the Isthmus of Corinth.

From internal evidence Dr. Paley has demonstrated the authenticity of this epistle; and its existence in the ancient *Antehieronymian* versions and the *Syriac*, as well as its being mentioned by the *Apostolic Fathers*, *Barnabas*, chap. xii. 13; *Clemens Romanus*, Ep. i. c. i. 30, 32, 35, 46; *Ignatius*, Epist. ad Ephes. 20, ad Smyrn. 1, ad Trall. 8; and *Polycarp*, 3 and 6, and by all *succeeding* writers, puts it beyond all dispute.

Of the fourteen epistles attributed to St. Paul, (thirteen only of which bear his name,) this has been reckoned the first in importance, though certainly not in order of time; for there is every reason to believe that both the epistles to the *Thessalonians*, that to the *Galatians*, those to the *Corinthians*, the first to *Timothy*, and that to *Titus*, were all written before the epistle to the Romans. See the dates of the books of the New Testament at the end of the introduction to the Gospels, &c.

In the arrangement of the epistles nothing seems to have been consulted besides the length of the epistle, the character of the writer, and the importance of the place to which it was sent. ROME, being the mistress of the world, the epistle to that city was placed first. Those to the *Corinthians*, because of the great importance of their city, next. *Galatia*, *Ephesus*, *Philippi*, *Colosse*, and *Thessalonica*, follow in graduated order. *Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon* succeed in the same way: and the epistle to the *Hebrews*, because the author of it was long in dispute, was placed at the end of the epistles of Paul, as being *probably* written by him. *James*, as Bp. of Jerusalem, precedes Peter, *Peter* precedes *John*, as the supposed chief of the apostles; and *John* the beloved disciple, *Jude*. The book of the *Revelation*, as being long disputed in the Christian Church, was thrown to the conclusion of the New Testament Scriptures. The *surats* or chapters of the *Koran* were disposed in the same sort of order; the *longest* being put first, and all the *short ones* thrown to the end, without any regard to the *times* in which it was pretended they were revealed.

There have been some doubts concerning the *language* in which this epistle was written. *John Adrian Bolten* endeavoured to prove that St. Paul wrote it in *Syriac*, and that it was translated into *Greek* by *Tertius*: but this supposition has been amply refuted by *Griesbach*. Others think that it must have been written originally in *Latin*, the language of the people to whom it was addressed; "for although the Greek tongue was well known in Rome, yet it was the language of the *great* and the *learned*; and it is more natural to suppose that the apostle would write in the language of the *common people*, as those were most likely to be his chief readers, than that of the *great* and the *learned*." This argument is more specious than solid.-1. It is certain that at this time the Greek language was very

generally cultivated in Rome, as it was in most parts of the Roman empire. *Cicer.*, *pro Arch.* 10, says *Græca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus: Latina, suis finibus, exiguis sane continentur.* "The Greek writings are read in almost all nations: those of the Latin within their own narrow limits." *Tacitus*, *Orator.* 29, observes, *Nunc natus infans delegatur Græculæ alicui ancillæ.* "Now the new-born child is put under the care of some Greek maid;" and this undoubtedly for the purpose of its learning to speak the Greek tongue. And *Juvenal*, *Sat.* vi. ver. 184, ridicules this affectation of his countrymen, which in his time appears to have been carried to a most extravagant excess.

*Nam quid rancidius, quam quod se non putat ulla  
Formosam, nisi quæ de Tusca Græcula facta est?  
De Sulmonensi mera Cecropis? OMNIA GRÆCE,  
Cum sit turpe magis nostris nescire Latine.  
Hoc sermone pavent, hoc Iram, Gaudia, Curas,  
Hoc cuncta effundunt animi secreta. Quid ultra*

"For what so nauseous and affected too,  
As those that think they due perfection want  
Who have not learned to lisp the *Grecian cant*?  
In *Greece* their whole accomplishments they seek:  
Their fashion, breeding, *language* must be *Greek*,  
But raw in all that does to *Rome* belong,  
They scorn to cultivate their *mother-tongue*,  
In *Greek* they flatter, all their fears they speak,  
Tell all their secrets, nay they scold in *Greek*."

DRYDEN.

From these testimonies it is evident that the Greek was a common language in Rome in the days of the apostle; and that in writing in this language, which he probably understood better than he did Latin, he consulted the *taste* and propensity of the Romans, as well as the probability of his epistle being more extensively read in consequence of its being written in *Greek*.

2. But were these arguments wanting, there are others of great weight that evince the propriety of choosing this language in preference to any other. The sacred writings of the Old Testament were, at that time, confined to two languages, the *Hebrew* and the *Greek*. The former was known only within the confines of Palestine; the latter over the whole Roman empire: and the *Latin* tongue appears to have been as much confined to *Italy* as the *Hebrew* was to *Judea*. The epistle, therefore, being designed by the Spirit of God to be of general use to the Christian Churches, not only in *Italy*, but through *Greece* and all *Asia Minor*, where the Greek language was spoken and understood, it was requisite that the instructions to be conveyed by it should be put in a language the most generally known; and a language too which was then in high and in daily increasing credit.

3. As the Jews were the principal objects of the epistle, and they must be convinced of the truth of Christianity from the evidence of their *own Scriptures*; and as the *Greek version* of the *Septuagint* was then their universal text-book, in all their dispersions, it was absolutely requisite that the epistle should be written in a tongue with which they were best acquainted, and in which their

acknowledged Scriptures were contained. These arguments seem conclusive for a *Greek* and not a *Latin* original of this epistle.

From the manner in which this epistle has been interpreted and applied, various most discordant and conflicting opinions have originated. Many commentators, forgetting the scope and design of it, have applied that to men in general which most obviously belongs to the Jews, as distinguished from the Gentiles, and to them only. From this one mistake the principal controversies that have agitated and divided the Church of Christ concerning the doctrines of unconditional *reprobation* and *election* have arisen. Men, eminent for their talents, learning, and piety, have interpreted and applied the whole on this mistaken ground. They have been opposed by others, not at all their inferiors either in religion or learning, who, not attending properly to the scope of the apostle, have rather argued from the perfections of the Divine nature, and the general concurrent sense of Scripture, and thus proved that such doctrines cannot comport with those perfections, nor with the analogy of faith; and that the apostle is to be interpreted according to these, and not according to the apparent grammatical import of the phraseology which he employs. On both sides the disputes have run high; the cause of truth has gained little, and Christian charity and candour have been nearly lost. Dispassionate men, on seeing this, have been obliged to exclaim:-

———*tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!*  
Can such fierce zeal in *heavenly* bosoms dwell!

To compose these differences, and do justice to the apostle, and set an important portion of the word of God in its true and genuine light, Dr. John Taylor of Norwich, a divine who yielded to few in command of temper, benevolent feeling, and deep acquaintance with the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, undertook the elucidation of this much-controverted epistle. The result of his labours was a paraphrase and notes on the whole book, to which is prefixed "A KEY to the Apostolic Writings; or, an essay to explain the Gospel scheme, and the principal words and phrases the apostles have used in describing it." 4to. 1769, fourth edition. This KEY, in the main, is a most invaluable work, and has done great justice to the subject. Christians, whether advocates for general or particular redemption, might have derived great service from this work, in explaining the Epistle to the Romans; but the author's creed, who was an *Arian*, (for he certainly cannot be ranked with modern Unitarians,) has prevented many from consulting his book.

To bring the subject of this epistle before the reader, into the fairest and most luminous point of view in my power, I think it right to make a large extract from this *Key*, steering as clear as possible of those points in which my own creed is certainly at variance with that of my author; especially in the articles of *Original Sin*, the *Atonement*, and *Deity of Christ*; but as these points are seldom directly touched in this introductory key, the reader need be under no apprehension that he shall meet with any thing in hostility to the orthodoxy of his own creed.

A KEY TO THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS; or, an Essay to explain the Gospel Scheme, and the principal words and phrases which the apostles have used in describing it.



§ 1. *On the Original and Nature of the Jewish Constitution of Religion.*

1. God, the Father of the universe, who has exercised his boundless wisdom, power, and goodness, in producing various beings of different capacities; who created the earth, and appointed divers climates, soils, and situations in it; hath, from the beginning of the world, introduced several schemes and dispensations for promoting the virtue and happiness of his rational creatures, for curing their corruption, and preserving among them the knowledge and worship of himself, the true God, the possessor of all being, and the fountain of all good.

2. In pursuance of this grand and gracious design, when, about four hundred years after the flood, the generality of mankind were fallen into idolatry, (a vice which in those times made its first appearance in the world,) and served *other gods*, thereby renouncing allegiance to the one God, the maker and governor of heaven and earth, He, to counteract this new and prevailing corruption, was pleased, in his infinite wisdom, to select *one family* of the earth to be a repository of true knowledge and the pattern of obedience and reward among the nations; that, as mankind were propagated, and idolatry took its rise and was dispersed from one part of the world into various countries, so also the knowledge, worship, and obedience of the true God might be propagated and spread from nearly the same quarter; or, however, from those parts which then were most famous and distinguished. To this family he particularly revealed himself, visited them with several public and remarkable dispensations of providence, and at last formed them into a *nation* under his special protection, and governed them by laws delivered from himself; placing them in the open view of the world, first in *Egypt*, and afterwards in the land of Canaan.

3. The head or root of this family was *Abraham*, the son of *Terah*, who lived in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, beyond *Euphrates*. His family was infected with the common contagion of idolatry, as appears from Joshua, **#Jos 24:2, 3**: "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (or river *Euphrates*) in old time; even Terah, the father of *Abraham*, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father *Abraham* from the other side of the flood, &c." And the Apostle Paul intimates as much, **#Ro 4:3-5**: "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." *Abraham* is the person he is discoursing about; and he plainly hints, though he did not care to speak out, that even *Abraham* was chargeable with not paying due reverence and worship to God; as the word [ΑΣΕΒΗΣ](#), which we render *ungodly*, properly imports.

4. But, though *Abraham* had been an idolater, God was pleased, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, to single him out to be the head or root of that family or nation which he intended to separate to himself from the rest of mankind for the forementioned purposes. Accordingly he appeared to him in his native country, and ordered him to leave it and his idolatrous kindred, and to remove into a distant land to which he would direct and conduct him, declaring at the same time his covenant or grant of mercy to him, in these words, **#Ge 12:1-3**: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So certainly did God make himself known to *Abraham*, that he was satisfied this was a

revelation from the one true God, and that it was his duty to pay an implicit obedience to it. Accordingly, upon the foot of this faith, he went out, though he did not know whither he was to go. The same covenant, or promise of blessings, God afterwards at sundry times repeated to him; particularly when it is said, **#Ge 15:5**: "And the Lord brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be." Here again he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for *righteousness*. Also, **#Ge 17:1-8**, he repeats and establishes the same covenant, to be a God unto *him* and *his seed* after him; promising him the land of *Canaan* for an everlasting possession, and appointing *circumcision* as a perpetual token of the certainty and perpetuity of this covenant. Thus *Abraham* was taken into God's covenant, and became entitled to the blessings it conveyed; not because he was not chargeable before God with impiety, irreligion, and idolatry; but because God, on his part, freely forgave his prior transgressions, and because *Abraham*, on his part, believed in the power and goodness of God; without which belief or persuasion that God was both true and able to perform what he had promised, he could have paid no regard to the Divine manifestations; and consequently must have been rejected as a person altogether improper to be the head of that family which God intended to set apart to himself.

5. And as *Abraham*, so likewise his seed or posterity, were at the same time, and before they had a being, taken into God's covenant, and entitled to the blessings of it. **#Ge 17:7**: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy SEED AFTER thee, &c." Not all his posterity, but only those whom God intended in the promise; namely, first, the nation of the *Jews*, who hereby became particularly related to God, and invested in sundry invaluable privileges; and, after them, the believing *Gentiles*, who were reckoned the children of *Abraham*, as they should believe in God as *Abraham* did.

6. For about two hundred and fifteen years from the time God ordered *Abraham* to leave his native country, he, and his son *Isaac* and grandson *Jacob*, sojourned in the land of *Canaan*, under the special protection of Heaven, till infinite wisdom thought fit to send the family into *Egypt*, the then head-quarters of idolatry, with a design they should there increase into a nation; and there, notwithstanding the cruel oppression they long groaned under, they multiplied to a surprising number. At length God delivered them from the servitude of *Egypt*, by the most dreadful displays of his almighty power; whereby he demonstrated himself to be the one true God, in a signal and complete triumph over idols, even in their metropolis, and in a country of fame and eminence among all the nations round about. Thus freed from the vilest bondage, God formed them into a *kingdom*, of which he himself was king; gave them a revelation of his nature and will; instituted sundry ordinances of worship; taught them the way of truth and life; set before them various motives to duty, promising singular blessings to their obedience and fidelity, and threatening disobedience and apostasy, or revolt from his government, with very heavy judgments, especially that of being expelled from the land of *Canaan* and "scattered among all people from one end of the earth unto the other," in a wretched, persecuted state; **#De 28:63-68**; **#Le 26:3, 4**, &c. Having settled their constitution, he led them through the wilderness, where he disciplined them for forty years together, made all opposition fall before them, and at last brought them to the promised land.

7. Here I may observe that God did not *choose* the *Israelites* out of any *partial regard* to that nation, nor because they were *better* than other people, (**#De 9:4, 5**), and would always observe his

laws. It is plain he knew the contrary, (**#De 31:29;32:5,6,15.**) It was indeed with great propriety that, among other advantages, he gave them also that of being descended from progenitors illustrious for piety and virtue and that he grounded the extraordinary favours they enjoyed upon *Abraham's* faith and obedience; **#Ge 22:16-18.** But it was not out of regard to the moral character of the *Jewish* nation that God chose them; any other nation would have served as well on that account; but, as he thought fit to select one nation of the world, he selected *them* out of respect to the piety and virtue of their ancestors; **#Ex 3:15; 6:3-5, #De 4:37.**

8. It should also be carefully observed that God selected the *Israelitish* nation, and manifested himself to them by various displays of his power and goodness, not principally for their *own sakes*, to make them a happy and flourishing people, but to be subservient to his own high and great designs with regard to *all mankind*. And we shall entertain a very wrong, low, and narrow idea of this select nation, and of the dispensations of God towards it, if we do not consider it as a *beacon*, or a *light* set upon a hill, as raised up to be a public voucher of the being and providence of God, and of the truth of the revelation delivered to them in all ages and in all parts of the world; and, consequently, that the Divine scheme, in relation to the *Jewish* polity, had reference to other people, and even to *us* at this day, as well as to the *Jews* themselves. The situation of this nation, lying upon the borders of *Asia, Europe, and Africa*, was very convenient for such a general purpose.

9. It is farther observable that this scheme was wisely calculated to answer great ends under all events. If this nation continued *obedient*, their visible prosperity, under the guardianship of an extraordinary Providence, would be a very proper and extensive instruction to the nations of the earth; and no doubt was so; for, as they were obedient, and favoured with the signal interpositions of the Divine power, their case was very useful to their neighbours. On the other hand, if they were *disobedient*, then their *calamities*, and especially their dispersions, would nearly answer the same purpose, by spreading the knowledge of the true God and of revelation in the countries where before they were not known. And so wisely was this scheme laid at first, with regard to the laws of the nation, both civil and religious, and so carefully has it all along been conducted by the Divine providence, that it still holds good, even at this day, full 3600 years from the time when it first took place, and is still of public use for confirming the truth of revelation. I mean, not only as the Christian profession spread over a great part of the world has grown out of this scheme, but as the *Jews* themselves, in virtue thereof, after a dispersion of about 1700 years over all the face of the earth, every where in a state of ignominy and contempt, have, notwithstanding, subsisted in great numbers, distinct and separate from all other nations. This seems to me a *standing miracle*; nor can I assign it to any other cause but the will and the extraordinary interposal of Heaven, when I consider that, of all the famous nations of the world who might have been distinguished from others with great advantage, and the most illustrious marks of honour and renown, as the *Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans*, who all, in their turns, held the empire of the world, and were, with great ambition, the lords of mankind, yet *these*, even in their own countries, the seat of their ancient glory, are quite dissolved and sunk into the body of mankind; nor is there a person upon earth can boast he is descended from those renowned and imperial ancestors. Whereas a small nation, generally despised, and which was, both by *Pagans* and *pretended Christians*, for many ages harassed, persecuted, butchered, and distressed, as the most detestable of all people upon the face of the earth, (according to the prophecy of Moses, **#De 28:63**, &c.; see Dr. Patrick's commentary upon that place,) and which, therefore, one would imagine, every soul that belonged to it should have gladly

disowned, and have been willing the odious name should be entirely extinguished; yet, I say, this hated nation has continued in a body quite *distinct* and *separate* from all other people, even in a state of dispersion and grievous persecution, for about 1700 years; agreeably to the prediction, **#Jer 46:28**: "I will make a full end of *all* the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee." This demonstrates that the wisdom which so formed them into a peculiar body, and the providence which has so preserved them that they have almost ever since the *deluge* subsisted in a state divided from the rest of mankind, and are still likely to do so, is not *human* but *Divine*. For, no human wisdom nor power could form, or, however, could execute such a vast, extensive design. Thus the very being of the *Jews*, in their present circumstances, is a standing public proof of the truth of revelation.

§ II. *The peculiar Honours and Privileges of the Jewish Nation, while they were the peculiar People of God, and the Terms signifying those Honours explained.*

10. The nature and dignity of the foregoing scheme, and the state and privileges of the *Jewish* nation will be better understood if we carefully observe the particular *phrases* by which their relation to God and his favours to them are expressed in Scripture.

11. As God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, was pleased to prefer them before any other nation, and to single them out for the purposes of revelation, and preserving the knowledge, worship, and obedience of the true God, he is said to *choose* them, and they are represented as his *chosen* or *elect* people. **#De 4:37; 7:6; 10:15**: "The Lord had a delight in thy fathers-and he *chose* their seed after them, even you above all people." **#1Ki 3:8**: "Thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast *chosen*, a great people that cannot be numbered." **#1Ch 16:13**: "O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen ones;" **#Ps 105:6; 33:12**: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath *chosen* for his own inheritance;" **#Ps 105:43; 106:5**: "That I may see the good of thy *chosen* or *elect*, that I may rejoice in the goodness of thy nation;" **#Ps 135:4; #Isa 41:8, 9; 43:20; 44:1, 2; 45:4**: "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine *elect*, I have even called thee by thy name." **#Eze 20:5**: "Thus saith the Lord, in the day when I *chose* Israel, and lifted my hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt." Hence, reinstating them in their former privileges is expressed by *choosing them again*. **#Isa 14:1**: "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet *choose* Israel, and set them in their own land;" **#Zec 1:17; 2:12**.

12. The first step he took in execution of his purpose of *election*, was to rescue them from their wretched situation, in the servitude and idolatry of *Egypt*; and to carry them, through all enemies and dangers, to the liberty and happy state to which he intended to advance them. With regard to which the language of Scripture is: 1. That he delivered; 2. Saved; 3. Bought, or purchased; 4. Redeemed them. **#Ex 3:8**: "And I am come down to *deliver* them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them unto a good land." So **#Ex 18:8-10; #Jud 6:8, 9; #Ex 6:6**: "I am the Lord, and I will bring you from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid (*deliver*) you out of their bondage. So **#Ex 5:23; #1Sa 10:18**.

13. As God brought them out of *Egypt*, invited them to the honours and happiness of his people, and by many express declarations and acts of mercy engaged them to adhere to him as their God, he

is said to *call* them, and they were his *called*. **#Isa 41:8, 9:** "But thou, Israel, art my servant,-thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and *called* thee from the chief men thereof." See **#Isa 41:2; #Isa 51:2; #Ho 11:1:** "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and *called* my son out of Egypt." **#Isa 48:12:** "Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel *my called*."

14. And as he brought them out of the most abject slavery, and advanced them to a new and happy state of being, attended with distinguishing privileges, enjoyments, and marks of honour, he is said-1. to *create, make, and form* them; 2. to give them *life*; 3. to have *begotten* them. **#Isa 43:1:** "But thus saith the Lord that *created* thee, O Jacob, and he that *formed* thee, O Israel, Fear not." **#Isa 43:5:** "Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and will gather thee from the west." **#Isa 43:7:** "Even every one that is called by my name; for I have *created* him for my glory; I have *formed* him; yea I have *made* him." **#Isa 43:15:** "I am the Lord, your Holy One; the *creator* of Israel, your king." **#De 32:6:** "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people?-Hath he not *made* thee, and established thee?" **#De 32:15; #Ps 149:2; #Isa 27:11:** "It is a people of no understanding; therefore, he that *made* them will have no mercy on them; and he that *formed* them will show them no favour;" **#Isa 43:21; 44:1, 2:** "Yet hear now, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen.: Thus saith the Lord that *made* thee, and *formed* thee from the womb." **#Isa 44:21, 24:** "Thus saith the Lord thy *Redeemer*, and he that *formed* thee from the womb," &c.

15. Thus, as God *created* the whole body of the *Jews*, and made them to *live*, they received a being or existence. **#Isa 63:19:** "We are; thou hast never ruled over them; (*the heathen*;) they were not called by thy name." Or rather thus: "We are of old; thou hast not ruled over them; thy name hath not been called upon them." It is in the *Hebrew*, **הַיִּינוּ מֵעוֹלָם לֹא מָשַׁלְתָּ בָּם** *hayinu me-olam, lo mashalla bam*; and are therefore called by the apostle, "things that *are*," in opposition to the *Gentiles*, who, as they were not formerly *created* in the same *manner*, were, "the things which *are not*;" **#1Co 1:28:** "God has chosen things which *are not*, to bring to nought things that are." Farther:-

16. As he made them *live*, and *begat* them, (1) He sustains the character of a *Father*; and (2) they are his *children*, his *sons* and *daughters*, which were born to him. **#De 32:6:** "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people?-Is he not thy *father* that hath *bought* thee?" **#Isa 63:16:** "Doubtless thou art our *father*, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not. Thou, O Lord, art our *Father*, our *Redeemer*," &c. **#Jer 31:9:** "For I am a *Father* to Israel, and Ephraim is my *first-born*." **#Mal 2:10:** "Have we not all one *father*? hath not one God *created* us?"

17. And, as the whole body of the *Jews* were the children of one father, even of God, this naturally established among themselves the mutual and endearing relation of *brethren*, (including that of *sisters*;) and they were obliged to consider and to deal with each other accordingly. **#Le 25:46; #De 1:16; 2:8; 15:7:** "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy *brethren*-thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand against thy *poor brother*;" **#De 17:15; 18:15; 19:19; 22:1; 23:19; 24:14; #Jud 20:13; #1Ki 12:24; [#Ac 23:1.]** And in many other places.

18. And the relation of God, as a *father* to the *Jewish* nation, and they his *children*, will lead our thoughts to a clear idea of their being, as they are frequently called, the *house* or *family* of God. **#Nu 12:7:** "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my *house*." **#1Ch 17:14:** "I will settle him

in my *house*, and in my kingdom for ever." **#Jer 12:7**: "I have forsaken my *house*, I have left my *heritage*." **#Ho 9:15**: "For the wickedness of their (*Ephraim's*) doings, I will drive them out of my *house*, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers; **#Zec 9:8**; **#Ps 93:5**. And in other places; and, perhaps, frequently in the *Psalms*. See **#Ps 23:6**; **27:4**, &c.

19. Farther; the Scripture directs us to consider the land of Canaan as the *estate* or *inheritance* belonging to this *house* or family. **#Nu 26:53**: "Unto these, (namely, all the children of *Israel*,) the land shall be divided for an *inheritance*." **#De 21:23**: "That thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an *inheritance*." See the same in many other places.

20. Here it may not be improper to take notice that the land of *Canaan*, in reference to their trials, wanderings, and fatigues in the wilderness, is represented as their *rest*. **#Ex 33:14**: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee *rest*." **#De 3:20**; **12:9**: "For ye are not yet come to the *rest* and to the *inheritance* which the Lord your God giveth you;" **#De 12:10**; **25:19**. **#Ps 95:11**: "Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my *rest*."

21. Thus the *Israelites* were the *house* or family of God. Or we may conceive them formed into a nation, having the Lord *Jehovah*, the true God, at their head; who, on this account, is styled their God, governor, protector, or king; and they his people, *subjects*, or servants. **#Ex 19:6**: "Ye shall be unto me a *kingdom of priests*, and a holy *nation*." **#De 4:34**: "Hath God essayed to go and take him a *nation* from the midst of another nation?" **#Isa 51:4**: "Hearken unto me my people, and give ear unto me my *nation*."

22. And it is in reference to their being a society peculiarly appropriated to God and under his special protection and government, that they are sometimes called the *city*, the *holy city*, the *city* of the Lord, of God. **#Ps 46:4**: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the *city* of our God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." **#Ps 101:8**: "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the *city* of the Lord." **#Isa 48:1, 2**: "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel; for they call themselves of the *holy city*, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel."

23. Hence the whole community, or Church, is denoted by the *city Jerusalem*, and sometimes by *Zion*, *Mount Zion*, the *city of David*. **#Isa 62:1, 6, 7**: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, *O Jerusalem*, which shall never hold their peace-and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make *Jerusalem* a praise in the earth." **#Isa 65:18, 19**: "I will rejoice in *Jerusalem*, and joy in my people;" **#Isa 66:10**; **#Eze 16:2, 3**; **#Joe 3:17**; **#Zec 1:14**; **8:3**, &c.; **#Zec 13:1**. **#Isa 28:16**: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in *Zion* for a foundation," &c.; **#Isa 61:3**; **#Joe 2:32**. **#Ob 1:17**: "But upon *Mount Zion* shall be deliverance," &c.; **#Ob 1:21**.

24. Hence, also, they are said to be *written* or *enrolled* in the book of God, as being citizens invested in the privileges and immunities of his kingdom. **#Ex 32:32**: "Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and, if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the *book* thou hast written." **#Ex 32:33**: "And the Lord said-Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my *book*;" **#Eze 13:9**.

25. And it deserves our notice that, as the other nations of the world did not belong to this *city*, *commonwealth*, or *kingdom* of God, and so were not his *subjects* and *people* in the same peculiar sense as the *Jews*, for these reasons they are frequently represented as *strangers* and *aliens*, and as being *not a people*. And, as they served other gods, and were generally corrupt in their morals, they have the character of enemies. #Ex 20:10; #Le 25:47: "And if a sojourner, or a *stranger*, wax rich by thee, and thy brother sell himself to the *stranger*." #De 14:21: "Thou mayest sell it to an alien." #Isa 61:5: "And *strangers* shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the *alien* shall be your plowmen." And in many other places #De 32:21: "I will move them to jealousy with those which are *not a people*;" #Isa 7:8; #Ho 1:10; 2:23: "I will say to them which were *not my people*, Thou art my people: and they shall say, Thou art *my God*." #Ps 74:4: "Thine *enemies* roar in the midst of thy *congregation*;" #Ps 78:66; 83:2; 89:10; #Isa 42:13; 59:18. #Ro 5:10: "When we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God;" #Col 1:21.

26. The kind and particular regards of God for the *Israelites*, and their special relation to him, are also signified by that of *husband* and *wife*; and his making a covenant with them to be their God, is called *espousals*. #Jer 31:32: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they broke, although I was a *husband* unto them, saith the Lord;)" #Jer 3:20; #Eze 16:31, 32. #Ho 2:2: "Plead (ye *children of Judah*, and *children of Israel*, #Ho 1:11) with your mother; plead, for she is not my *wife*, neither am I her *husband*;" that is, for her wickedness I have *divorced* her, (#Isa 62:4, 5.) #Jer 2:2: "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine *espousals*; when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in the land that was not sown." #Jer 3:14: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am *married* unto you;" #Isa 62:4, 5.

27. Hence it is that the *Jewish Church*, or community, is represented as a *mother*; and particular members as her *children*. #Isa 50:1: "Thus saith the Lord, where is the bill of your *mother's* divorcement?" &c. #Ho 2:2, 5: "For their *mother* hath played the harlot." #Isa 49:17: "Thy *children* (*O Zion*) shall make haste," &c.; #Isa 49:22, 25; #Jer 5:7; #Eze 16:35, 36. #Ho 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge-seeing thou hast forgotten the law of God, I will also forget thy *children*."

28. Hence, also, from the notion of the *Jewish Church* being a *wife* to God her *husband*, her idolatry, or worshipping of strange gods, comes under the name of *adultery* and *whoredom*, and she takes the character of a *harlot*. #Jer 3:8: "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed *adultery*." #Jer 3:9: "And it came to pass, through the lightness of her *whoredom*, that she defiled the land, and committed *adultery* with stones and with stocks;" #Jer 13:27; #Eze 16:15; 23:43; #Jer 3:6: "Backsliding Israel is gone up upon every high mountain, and under every green tree, and there has played the *harlot*."

29. As God exercised a singular providence over them in supplying, guiding, and protecting them, he was their *shepherd*, and they his *flock*, his *sheep*. #Ps 77:20; 78:52; 80:1: "Give ear, O *shepherd* of Israel." #Isa 40:11: "He shall feed his *flock* like a *shepherd*." #Ps 74:1: "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the *sheep* of thy pasture?" #Ps 79:13;



**95:7; #Jer 13:17:** "Mine eye shall weep sore-because the Lord's *flock* is carried captive." See Eze 34: throughout; and in many other places.

30. Upon nearly the same account, as God established them, provided proper means for their happiness, and improvement in knowledge and virtue, they are compared to a *vine* and a *vineyard*, and God to the *husbandman* who *planted* and *dressed* it; and particular members of the community are compared to *branches*. **#Ps 80:8:** "Thou hast brought a *vine* out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen and *planted* it." **#Ps 80:14:** "Return, we beseech thee, O Lord of hosts; look down from heaven; behold and visit this *vine*, and the *vineyard* which thy right hand has *planted*." **#Isa 5:1, 2:** "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song, touching his *vineyard*. My well-beloved has a *vineyard* in a very fruitful hill; and he fenced it," &c. **#Isa 5:7:** "For the *vineyard* of the Lord-is the house of Israel;" **#Ex 15:17; #Jer 2:21. #Ps 80:11:** "She sent out her *boughs* unto the sea, and her *branches* unto the river." **#Isa 27:9-11:** "By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged;-yet the defenced city shall be desolate,-there shall the calf feed,-and consume the *branches* thereof. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a *people* of no understanding; therefore, he that made them will have no mercy on them." **#Jer 11:16:** "The Lord hath called thy name a green *olive tree*, fair and of goodly fruit," &c.; **#Eze 17:6; #Ho 14:5, 6; #Na 2:2;** and in many other places. **#Ro 11:17-19:** "And if some of the *branches* were broken off," &c. "Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."

31. As they were, by the will of God, *set apart*, and appropriated in a special manner to his honour and obedience, and furnished with extraordinary means and motives to holiness, so God is said to *sanctify* or *hallow* them. **#Ex 31:13:** "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth *sanctify* you;" **#Eze 20:12; #Le 20:8:** "And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them; for I am the Lord which *sanctify* you;" **#Le 21:8; 22:9, 16, 32; #Eze 37:28.**

32. Hence it is that they are styled a *holy* nation, or people, and *saints*. **#Ex 19:6:** "And ye shall be to me-a *holy* nation." **#De 7:6:** "For thou art a *holy* people unto the Lord thy God;" **#De 14:2; 26:19; 33:3. #2Ch 6:41:** "Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy *saints* rejoice in goodness." **#Ps 34:9:** "O fear the Lord, ye his *saints*." **#Ps 50:5:** "Gather my *saints* together unto me." **#Ps 50:7:** "Hear, O my people," &c.; **#Ps 79:2; 148:14:** "He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of his *saints*; even of the children of Israel," &c.

33. Farther, by his presence among them, and their being consecrated to him, they were made his *house* or *building*, the sanctuary which he built. And this is implied by his *dwelling* and *walking* amongst them. **#Ps 114:2:** "Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion." **#Isa 56:3-5:** "Neither let the son of the *stranger*, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his *people*:-for thus saith the Lord-Even unto them will I give in my *house*, and within my walls, a place and a name." **#Jer 33:7:** "And I will cause the captivity of Judah and of Israel to return,-and will *build* them as at the first." **#Am 9:11:** "I will raise up the tabernacle of David-I will raise up its ruins, and I will *build* it as in the days of old." **#Ex 25:8:** "And let them, (the children of Israel,) make me a sanctuary; that I may *dwell* among them." **#Ex 29:45, 46:** "And I will *dwell* among the children of Israel, and I will be their God," &c. **#Le 26:11, 12:** "And I will set my tabernacle among you:-And I will *walk* among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my

people;" **#Nu 35:34; #2Sa 7:7. #Eze 43:7, 9:** "And he said unto me-the place of my *throne*, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I *dwell* in the midst of the children of Israel," &c. Hence we may gather that *dwell*, in such places, imports to *reign*, and may be applied figuratively to whatever *governs* in our hearts; **#Ro 7:17, 20; 8:9, 11.**

34. And not only did God, as their king, dwell among them, as in his *house, temple*, or palace; but he also conferred upon them the honour of *kings*, as he redeemed them from servitude, and made them *lords* of themselves, and raised them above other nations, to reign over them; and of priests, too, as they were to attend upon God, from time to time, continually, in the solemn offices of religion, which he had appointed. **#Ex 19:6:** "And ye shall be unto me a *kingdom of priests*, or a *kingly priesthood*." **#De 26:19:** "And to make thee *high above* all nations-in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be a *holy* people unto the Lord thy God;" **#De 28:1; 15:6:** "For the Lord thy God blesseth thee-and thou shalt *reign* over many nations." **#Isa 61:6:** "But ye, (the seed of Jacob,) shall be named the *priests* of the Lord; men shall call you the *ministers* of our God."

35. Thus the whole body of the *Jewish* nation were *separated* unto God; and, as they were more nearly related to him than any other people, as they were joined to him in covenant, and felt access to him in the ordinances of worship, and, in virtue of his promise, had a particular title to his regards and blessings, he is said to be near unto them, and they unto him; **#Ex 33:16. #Le 20:24:** "I am the Lord your God, who have *separated* you from other people;" **#Le 20:26; #1Ki 8:52, 53. #De 4:7:** "For what nation is there so great, that hath God so *near* unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" **#Ps 148:14:** "The children of Israel, a people *near* unto him."

36. And here I may observe that, as the *Gentiles* were not then taken into the same peculiar covenant with the *Jews*, nor stood in the same special relation to God, nor enjoyed their extraordinary religious privileges, but lay out of the commonwealth of *Israel*, they are, on the other hand said to be *far off*. **#Isa 57:19:** "I create the fruit of the lips: peace, peace to him that is *far off*, and to him that is *near*, saith the Lord, and I will heal him." **#Zec 6:15:** "And they that are *far off* shall come and build in the *temple*." **#Eph 2:17:** "And came and preached to you, (*Gentiles*,) which were *afar off*, and to them that were *nigh*, (the *Jews*.)

37. And as God had, in all these respects, distinguished them from all other nations, and sequestered them unto himself, they are styled his *peculiar people*. **#De 7:6:** "The Lord has chosen thee to be a special (or peculiar) *people* unto himself." **#De 14:2:** "The Lord hath chosen thee to be a *peculiar people* unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth;" **#De 26:18.**

38. As they were a body of men particularly related to God, instructed by him in the rules of wisdom, devoted to his service, and employed in his true worship, they are called his *congregation* or *Church*. **#Nu 16:3; 27:17; #Jos 22:17. #1Ch 28:8:** "Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel the *congregation, the Church*, of the Lord;" **#Ps 74:2.**

39. For the same reason they are considered as God's *possession, inheritance*, or *heritage*. **#De 9:26:** "O Lord, destroy not thy people and thine *inheritance*;" **#De 9:29; #Ps 33:12; 106:40; #Jer 10:16; 12:7:** "I have forsaken my *house*, I have left my *heritage*. I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies." And in many other places.

### § III. Reflections on the foregoing Privileges and Honours.

40. Whether I have ranged the foregoing particulars in proper order, or given an exact account of each, let the studious of Scripture knowledge consider. What ought to be specially observed is this; that all the forementioned privileges, benefits, relations, and honours, did belong to ALL the children of *Israel*, without exception. The Lord Jehovah was the *God, King, Saviour, Father, Husband, Shepherd, &c.*, to them ALL. He *saved, bought, redeemed*; he *created*, he *begot*, he *made*, he *planted, &c.*, them ALL. And they were ALL his *people, nation, heritage*; his *children, spouse, flock, vineyard, &c.* They *all* had a right to the *ordinances* of worship, to the *promises* of God's blessing, and especially to the promise of the land of *Canaan*; ALL enjoyed the protection and special favours of God in the wilderness, till they had forfeited them; ALL ate of the *manna*, and ALL drank of the *water* out of the *rock, &c.* That these privileges and benefits belonged to the *whole body* of the *Israelitish* nation is evident from all the texts I have already quoted; which he, who observes carefully, will find, do all of them speak of the whole nation, the whole community, without exception.

41. And that all these privileges, honours, and advantages were *common* to the whole nation, is confirmed by this farther consideration; that they were the effect of God's *free grace*, without regard to any *prior* righteousness of theirs; and therefore they are assigned to God's love as the *spring* from whence they flowed; and the donation of those benefits is expressed by God's loving them: they are also assigned to God's mercy, and the bestowing of them is expressed by God's showing them mercy. **#De 9:4-6**: "Speak not thou in thy heart, after that the Lord hath cast them out before thee, saying, For my *righteousness* the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.-Not for thy *righteousness* or the *uprightness* of thy heart dost thou go to possess their land," &c. "Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy *righteousness*; for thou art a stiff-necked people."

42. **#De 7:7, 8**: "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor *choose* you, because ye were more in number than any people; but because the Lord *loved* you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out" (*of Egypt.*) **#De 33:3**: "He *loved* the people;" **#Isa 43:3, 4**; **#Jer 31:3**; **#Ho 3:1; 9:15**.

43. It is on account of this general love to the *Israelites*, that they are honoured with the title of *Beloved* **#Ps 60:5**: "That thy *beloved* may be delivered, save with thy right hand, and hear me;" **#Ps 108:6**. **#Jer 11:15**: "What hath my *beloved* to do in my house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many?" **#Jer 12:7**: "I have forsaken my *house*, I have given the dearly *beloved* of my soul into the hands of my enemies," (and in their present condition at this day the Jews are still, in a sense, beloved, **#Ro 11:28**.)

44. **#Ex 15:13**: "Thou, in thy *mercy*, hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed," &c.; **#Ps 98:3**; **#Isa 54:10**. **#Mic 7:20**: "Thou shalt perform the truth to Jacob, and the *mercy* to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." **#Lu 1:54, 55**: "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his *mercy*, as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed for ever." Agreeably to this he *showed* them mercy, as he continued them to be his people, when he might have cut them off. **#Ex 33:19**: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and

I will *show mercy* on whom I will *show mercy*." And when, after their present state of rejection, they shall again be taken into the Church, this too is expressed by their "obtaining mercy," **#Ro 11:31**.

45. In these texts, and others of the same kind, it is evident the *love* and *mercy* of God hath respect not to *particular persons* among the *Jews*, but to the *whole nation*; and therefore it is to be understood of that general love and mercy whereby he singled them out to be a peculiar nation to himself, favoured with extraordinary blessings.

46. And it is with regard to this sentiment and manner of speech, that the GENTILES, who were not distinguished in the same manner, are said not to have obtained mercy. **#Ho 2:23**: "And I will sow her unto me in the earth, and I will have *mercy* upon her that had not *obtained mercy*, and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."

47. Farther, it should be noted, as a very material and important circumstance, that all this mercy and love was granted and confirmed to the *Israelites* under the sanction of a *covenant*; the most solemn declaration and assurance, sworn to and ratified by the oath of God. **#Ge 17:7, 8**: "And I will establish my *covenant* between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting *covenant*; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." **#Ge 22:16-18**: "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." This covenant with *Abraham* was the *Magna Charta*, the *basis* of the *Jewish* constitution, which was renewed afterwards with the whole nation; and is frequently referred to as the ground and security of all their blessings. **#Ex 6:3-7**: "I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac," &c. "And I have also established my *covenant* with them, to give them the land of Canaan. I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, and I have remembered my *covenant*, and will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God;" **#De 7:8**. **#Ps 105:8-10**: "He hath remembered his *covenant* for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his *oath* unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting COVENANT;" **#Jer 11:5**; **#Eze 16:8**; **20:5**.

48. But, what most of all deserves our attention is this, that the Jewish constitution was a *scheme for promoting virtue*, true religion, or a good and pious life. In all the forementioned instances they were very happy. But were they to rest in them? Because these blessings were the gift of love and mercy, without respect to their righteousness or obedience, was it therefore needless for them to be obedient? or, were they purely on account of benefits already received, secure of the favour and blessing of God for ever? By no means. And that I may explain this important point more clearly, I shall distinguish their blessings into *antecedent* and *consequent*, and show, from the Scriptures, how both stand in relation to their duty.

49. *Antecedent blessings* are all the benefits hitherto mentioned, which were given by the mere grace of God, *antecedently* to their obedience, and without respect to it; but *yet so* that they were intended to be *motives* to obedience. Which effect if they produced, then their *election*, *redemption*,

and *calling* were confirmed; and they were entitled to all their blessings, promised in the covenant; which blessings I therefore call *consequent*, because they were given only in *consequence* of their obedience. But, on the other hand, if the *antecedent* blessings did not produce obedience to the will of God; if his *chosen people*, his *children*, did not obey his voice, then they forfeited all their privileges, all their honours, and relations to God, all his favours and promises, and fell under the severest threatenings of his wrath and displeasure. Thus life itself may be distinguished into-I. *Antecedent*, which God gives freely to all his creatures of his mere good will and liberality, before they can have done any thing to deserve it. II. *Consequent* life; which is the continuance of life in happy circumstances, and has relation to the good conduct of a rational creature. As he improves life *antecedent*, so he shall, through the favour of God, enjoy life *consequent*.

50. And that this was the very *end* and *design* of the dispensation of God's extraordinary favours to the *Jews*, namely, to engage them to duty and obedience; or, that it was a *scheme for promoting virtue*, is clear, beyond all dispute, from every part of the Old Testament. Note: I shall make ANT. stand for *antecedent* love or motives; CONS. for *consequent* love or *reward*; and THR. for *threatening*. (Ant.) **#Ge 17:1**: "I am God, all-sufficient; (Duty) Walk before me, and be thou perfect." **#Ge 17:7-9**: (Ant.) "I will be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and unto thy seed, the land of Canaan; and I will be their God. (Duty) Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee." **#Ge 22:16, 18**: (Duty) "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, because thou hast obeyed my voice;" **#Ge 22:16-18**: (Cons.) "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

51. Here let it be noted, that the same blessings may be both *consequent* and *antecedent* with regard to different persons. With regard to *Abraham*, the blessings promised in this place (**#Ge 22:16-18**) are *consequent*, as they were the reward of his *obedience*, "because thou hast obeyed my voice." But with regard to his posterity these same blessings were of the *antecedent* kind; because, though they had respect to *Abraham's* obedience, yet; with regard to the *Jews*, they were given freely or *antecedently* to any obedience *they* had performed. So the blessings of redemption, with regard to our Lord's obedience, are *consequent*; but, with regard to us, they are of free grace and antecedent, not owing to any obedience of ours, though granted in *consequence* of *Christ's* obedience; **#Php 2:8, 9**, &c.; **#Eph 1:7**; **#Heb 5:8, 9**. Nor doth the donation of blessings upon *many*, in consequence of the obedience of *one*, at all diminish the grace, but very much recommends the wisdom that bestows them.

52. **#Isa 43:7, 21**: (Ant.) "This people have I made for myself: (Duty) They shall show forth my praise;" **#Jer 13:11**; **#Le 20:7, 8**:

(Ant.) "I am the Lord your God; I am the Lord which sanctify you. (Duty) Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; and ye shall keep my statutes and do them." **#De 4:7-9**:

(Ant.) "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh them, as the Lord our God is? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous," &c. (Duty) "Only take

heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen." **#De 4:20:**

(Ant.) "The Lord hath taken you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are at this day." **#De 4:23:** (Duty) "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God." **#De 4:24:** (Thr.) "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire." **#De 4:25:** "When ye shall corrupt yourselves, and do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God." **#De 4:26:** "I call heaven and earth to witness, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land." **#De 4:34:**

(Ant.) "Hath God assayed to go, and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by signs and wonders," &c., &c. **#De 4:39, 40:** (Duty) "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thy heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above," &c. "Thou shalt keep, therefore, his statutes and his commandments, (Cons.) that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee," &c. **#De 5:6, 7:**

(Ant.) "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." (Duty) "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," &c. **#De 5:29:** "O that there were such a heart in them that they should fear me and keep all my commandments always, (Cons.) that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever." **#De 5:33:** (Duty) "You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, (Cons.) that ye may live, and that it may be well with you," &c. **#De 6:21:**

(Ant.) "We were Pharaoh's bondmen, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt," &c. **#De 6:24:** (Duty) "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, (Cons.) for our good always, that he might preserve us alive," &c. **#De 7:6-8:**

(Ant.) "Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself: the Lord loved you and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen." **#De 7:9:** (Duty) "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God," &c. **#De 7:11:** "Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments which I command thee this day, to do them." **#De 7:12, 13, 18:** (Cons.) "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers. And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee," &c. **#De 8:2:**

(Ant.) "Thou shalt remember ail the way which the Lord thy God led thee," &c. **#De 8:5:** "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." **#De 8:6:** (Duty) "Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him." **#De 8:11:** "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God," &c. **#De 8:19:** (Thr.) "And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish." **#De 10:15:**

(Ant.) "The Lord hath a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people." **#De 10:12, 16:** (Duty) "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart," &c. **#De 10:22:**

(Ant.) "Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons, and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude." **#De 11:1, 8:** (Duty) "Therefore shalt thou love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge," &c. **#De 11:13, 14:** "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments," &c., (Cons.) "that I will give you the rain of your land," &c. **#De 11:26:** "Behold, I set before you this day a *blessing* and a *curse*. A *blessing*, if you obey the commandments of the Lord; and a *curse*, if ye will not obey," &c. **#De 12:28:** (Duty) "Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, (Cons.) that it may go well with thee and thy children after thee for ever, when thou hast done that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God;" **#De 13:17, 18; 15:4, 5; 27:9, 10:**

(Ant.) "Take heed and hearken, O Israel: this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God. (Duty) Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments," &c. **#De 28:1:** "And it shall come to pass, if thou hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do his commandments, (Cons.) that the Lord will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. And all these *blessings* shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city," &c. **#De 28:15:** (Thr.) "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments and his statutes, that all these *curses* shall come upon thee and overtake thee," &c. **#De 28:45:** "Moreover, all these curses shalt come upon thee till thou be destroyed, because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God;" **#De 29:2, 10; 30:15-18:** (Duty) "See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, (Cons.) that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. (Thr.) But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away and worship other gods, and serve them, I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish."

53. Whosoever peruses the first sixteen, and the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, thirtieth, thirty-first, and thirty-second chapters of *Deuteronomy*, will clearly see that all the privileges, honours, instructions, protections, &c., which were given them as a select body of men, were intended as *motives* to obedience; which, if thus wisely improved, would bring upon them still farther blessings. Thus God *drew* them to duty and virtue *by his loving-kindness*. **#Jer 31:3:** "He drew them with cords of a man, (*such considerations as are apt to influence the rational nature*,) and with the bands of love;" **#Ho 11:4.** But if they were disobedient, and did not make a right use of God's benefits and favours, then they were subjected to a curse, and should perish. And this is so evident from this single book that I shall not need to heap together the numerous quotations which might be collected from other parts of Scripture, particularly the prophetic writings. Only I may farther establish this point by observing, -that, in *fact*, though all the *Israelites* in the wilderness were the *people, children, and chosen* of God; all entitled to the Divine blessing, and partakers of the several instances of his goodness; yet, notwithstanding all their advantages and honours, when they were *disobedient* to his will, distrustful of his power and providence, or revolted to the worship of idol gods, great numbers



of them fell under the Divine vengeance; #Ex 32:8, 27, 28; #Nu 11:4-6, 33; 16:2, 3, 32, 35, 41, 49; 21:5, 6. And though they had *all* a promise of entering into the land of *Canaan*, yet the then generation, from twenty years old and upwards, for their unbelief, were, by the righteous judgment of God, excluded from the benefit of that promise: they forfeited their inheritance, and died in the wilderness; #Nu 14:28-36; #Heb 3:7, &c.

54. From all this it appears that all the high privileges of the *Jews* before mentioned, and all the singular relations in which they stood to God, as they were *saved, bought, redeemed* by him; as they were his *called* and *elect*; as they were his *children* whom he *begot, created, made, and formed*; his *sons* and *daughters, born to him*; his *heritage, church, house, and kingdom*; his *saints*, whom he sanctified; his *vine or vineyard*, which he *planted*; his *sheep and flock*;—I say these, and such like honours, advantages, and relations, as they are assigned to the whole body, do not import an *absolute final state of happiness and favour of any kind*; but are to be considered as displays, instances, and descriptions of God's love and goodness to them, which were to operate as a *mean*, a moral mean, upon their heart. They were, in truth, motives to oblige and excite to obedience; and only when so improved, became *final* and *permanent* blessings; but neglected, or misimproved, they were enjoyed *in vain*, they vanished and came to nothing; and wicked *Israelites* were no more the objects of God's favour than wicked *heathens*. #Am 9:7, speaking of the corrupt *Jews*: "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord."

55. And upon the whole, we may from the clearest evidence conclude that the selecting the *Jewish* nation from the rest of the world, and taking them into a peculiar relation to God, was a scheme for promoting true religion and virtue in all its principles and branches, upon motives adapted to rational nature; which principles and branches of true religion are particularly specified in their law. And to this end, no doubt, every part of their constitution, even the *ceremonial*, was wisely adapted, considering their circumstances, and the then state of the world.

56. The love of God, as it was the *foundation* and *original* of this scheme, so it was the prime *motive* in it. God began the work of salvation among them, antecedently to any thing which they might do, on their part, to engage his goodness. They did not *first* love God; but God *first* loved them: their *obedience* did not *first* advance towards God; but his *mercy first* advanced towards them, and *saved, bought, redeemed* them; took them for his people, and gave them a part in the blessings of his covenant. And as for his *displeasure*, they were under that only *consequently*; or after they had neglected his goodness, and abused the mercy and means, the privileges and honours, which they enjoyed. This, I think, must appear very evident to any one who closely and maturely deliberates upon the true state of the Jewish Church.

Thus, and for those ends, not excluding others before or afterwards mentioned, the *Jewish* constitution was erected.

#### § IV. *The Jewish peculiarity not prejudicial to the rest of Mankind; the Jewish Economy being established; for the Benefit of the World in general.*

57. But although the Father of mankind was pleased, in his wisdom to erect the foregoing scheme, for promoting virtue and preserving true religion in one nation of the world, upon which he conferred

particular blessings and privileges; this was no injury nor prejudice to the rest of mankind. For, as to original favours, or external advantages, God, who may do what he pleases with his own, bestows them in any kind or degree, as he thinks fit. Thus he makes a variety of creatures; some *angels* in a higher sphere of being, some *men* in a lower. And, among men, he distributes different faculties, stations, and opportunities in life. To one he gives *ten talents*, to another *five*, to another *two*, and to another *one*, severally as he pleases; without any impeachment of his justice, and to the glorious display and illustration of his wisdom. And so he may bestow different advantages and favours upon different nations, with as much justice and wisdom as he has placed them in different climates, or vouchsafed them various accommodations and conveniencies of life. But, whatever advantages some nations may enjoy above others, still God is the God and *Father of all*; and his extraordinary blessings to some are not intended to diminish his regards to others. He erected a scheme of polity and religion for promoting the knowledge of God, and the practice of virtue in one nation; but not with a design to withdraw his goodness or providential regards from the rest. God has made a variety of soils and situations; yet he cares for every part of the globe; and the inhabitants of the *North Cape*, where they conflict a good part of the year with *night* and extreme *cold*, are no more neglected by the universal Lord, than those who enjoy the perpetual summer and pleasures of the *Canary Isles*. At the same time God chose the children of *Israel* to be his peculiar people in a special covenant, he was the God of the rest of mankind, and regarded them as the objects of his care and benevolence. **#Ex 19:5**: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a *peculiar treasure unto me* above all people; **כִּי לִי כָל הָאָרֶץ**, *although* all the earth is mine." So it should be rendered. **#De 10:14, 15**: "Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the *earth* with *all* that therein *are*. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to *love* them, and he *chose* their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day." **#De 10:17, 18**: "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which *regardeth not persons*, (*or* is no respecter of persons, **#Ac 10:34**, through partiality to one person or one nation more than another,) nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and *loveth the stranger*, in giving him food and raiment." A *stranger* was one who was of any other nation beside the *Jewish*. **#Ps 146:9**: "The Lord preserveth the *strangers*;" **#Ps 8:1; 19:1-4; 24:1; 33:5**: "The *earth* is full of the goodness of the Lord." **#Ps 33:8**: "Let *all* the earth fear the Lord; let *all* the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him." **#Ps 33:12**: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath *chosen* for his own *inheritance*." **#Ps 33:13**: "The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth *all* the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon *all* the inhabitants of the earth; he fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works." **#Ps 47:2, 8**: "The Lord most high is a great king over *all* the earth. God reigneth over the heathen;" **#Ps 46:7; 107:8, 15, 21; 145:9**: "The Lord is good to *all*, and his tender mercies are over *all* his *works*." Many more passages might be brought out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament to show that *all the nations of the earth* were the object of the Divine care and goodness; at the same time that he vouchsafed a *particular* and extraordinary providence towards the *Jewish* nation.

58. And, agreeably to this, the *Israelites* were required to exercise all benevolence to the *Gentiles*, or *strangers*; to abstain from all injurious treatment; to permit them to dwell peaceably and comfortably among them; to partake of their blessings; to incorporate into the same happy body, if they thought fit; and to join in their religious solemnities. **#Ex 22:21**: "Thou shalt neither vex a *stranger* nor oppress him;" **#Ex 22:9, 12. #Le 19:10**: "Thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither

shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and *stranger*; I am the Lord your God;" #Le 23:22; 19:33, 34: "And if a *stranger* sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the *stranger* that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born amongst you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." #Le 25:35: "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a *stranger* or a *sojourner*; that he may live with thee." #Nu 15:14, 15: "And if a *stranger* sojourn with you, or *whosoever* be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; as ye do, so shall he do. One ordinance shall be both for *you* of the congregation and also for the *stranger* that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations; as ye are, so shall the *stranger* be, before the Lord." #De 26:11, 12: "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thy house, thou, and the Levite, and the *stranger* that is among you;" #Eze 22:7, 29.

59. And not only were they required to treat *strangers*, or men of other nations, with *kindness* and *humanity*; but it appears from several parts of Scripture that the whole *Jewish* dispensation had respect to the nations of the world. Not, indeed, to bring them all into the *Jewish* Church, (that would have been impracticable as to the greatest part of the world,) but to spread the knowledge and obedience of God in the earth. Or, it was a scheme which was intended to have its good effects beyond the pale of the *Jewish* enclosure, and was established for the benefit of all mankind. #Ge 12:5: "And in thee (*Abraham*) shall all families of the earth be blessed." #Ge 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." #Ex 7:5: "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel." #Ex 9:16: "And indeed for this very cause have I raised thee (*Pharaoh*) up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name shall be declared throughout all the earth;" #Ex 15:14; #Le 26:46; #Nu 14:13-15.

60. But though the *Jewish* peculiarity did not exclude the rest of the world from the care and beneficence of the universal Father; and though the *Jews* were commanded to exercise benevolence towards persons of other nations; yet, about the time when the Gospel was promulgated, the *Jews* were greatly elevated on account of their distinguishing privileges: they looked upon themselves as the only favourites of Heaven, and regarded the rest of mankind with a sovereign contempt, as nothing, as abandoned of God, and without a possibility of salvation, unless they should incorporate, in some degree or other, with their nation. Their constitution, they supposed, was established for ever, never to be altered, or in any respect abolished. They were the true and only Church, out of which no man could be accepted of God; and consequently, unless a man submitted to the law of *Moses*, how virtuous or good soever he were, it was their belief he could not be saved. He had no right to a place in the Church, nor could hereafter obtain life.

#### § V. *The Jewish peculiarity was to receive its perfection from the Gospel.*

61. But the *Jewish* dispensation, as peculiar to that people, though *superior* to the mere light of nature, which it supposed and included, was but of a temporary duration, and of an inferior and imperfect kind, in comparison of that which was to follow, and which God from the beginning (when he entered into covenant with *Abraham*, and made the promise to him) intended to erect, and which he made several declarations under the Old Testament that he would erect, in the proper time, as successive to the *Jewish* dispensation, and, as a superstructure, perfective of it. And as the *Jewish*

dispensation was erected by the ministry of a much nobler hand, even that of the SON of GOD, the *Messiah*, foreordained before the world was made, promised to *Abraham*, foretold by the *prophets*, and even expected by the *Jews* themselves, though under no just conceptions of the end of his coming into the world. He was to assume and live in a human body, to declare the truth and grace of God more clearly and expressly to the *Jews*, to exhibit a pattern of the most perfect *obedience*, and to be obedient even unto death in compliance with the will of God.\* When Christ came into the world, the *Jews* were ripe for destruction: but he published a general indemnity for the transgressions of the former covenant, upon their repentance; and openly revealed a future state, as the true land of promise, even eternal life in heaven. Thus he confirmed the former covenant with the *Jews* as to the favour and blessing of God; and enlarged, or more clearly explained it, as to the blessings therein bestowed; instead of an earthly *Canaan*, revealing the resurrection from the dead, and everlasting happiness and glory in the world to come.

\* Yes, and thus to become a sacrifice for sin, that those who believe in him might have redemption in his blood. This is the light in which the New Testament places the death of Christ.-A. C.

62. That the Gospel is the *Jewish* scheme *enlarged* and *improved*, will evidently appear, if we consider that we, *Gentiles*, believing in *Christ*, are said to be incorporated into the same body with the *Jews*; and that believing *Jews* and *Gentiles* are now become *one*, *one flock*, *one body* in *Christ*. **#Joh 10:16**: "And other sheep I have which are not of this (*the Jewish*) fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be *one flock*, (so the word ποιμνι signifies, and so our translators have rendered it in all the other places where it is used in the New Testament. See **#Mt 26:31**; **#Lu 2:8**; **#1Co 9:7**. And here also it should have been translated *flock*, not *fold*,) and *one shepherd*." **#1Co 12:12**: "By one Spirit are we all baptized in *one body*, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*." **#Ga 3:28**: "There is neither *Jew* nor *Greek*, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all ONE in *Christ Jesus*;" that is, under the Gospel dispensation. **#Eph 2:14-16**: "For he is our peace, who has made both (*Jews* and *Gentiles*) *one*, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, (*Jews* and *Gentiles*.) Having abolished by his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

63. And that this union or coalition between believing *Jews* and *Gentiles* is to be understood of the believing *Gentiles* being taken into that Church and covenant in which the *Jews* were before the Gospel dispensation was erected, and out of which the unbelieving *Jews* were cast, is evident from the following considerations.

64. *First*, that *Abraham*, the head or root of the *Jewish* nation, is the father of us all. **#Ro 4:16, 17**: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, (*the Jews*,) but to that also which is of the faith of *Abraham*, (*the believing Gentiles*,) who is *the father of us all*, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed;" that is to say, in the account and purpose of God, whom he believed, he is the father of US ALL. *Abraham*, when he stood before God and received the promise, did not, in the account of God, appear as a *private* person, but as *the father of*

*us all*; as the *head* and *father* of the whole future Church of God, from whom we were all, believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to descend; as we were to be accepted and interested in the Divine blessing and covenant after the same manner as he was, namely, by faith. **#Ga 3:6**, &c.: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. For the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify (would take into his Church and covenant) the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith (of what country soever they are, heathens as well as Jews) are blessed, (justified, taken into the kingdom and covenant of God,) together with believing Abraham," (and into that very covenant which was made with him and his seed.)\* In this covenant were the *Jews* during the whole period from *Abraham* to *Moses*, and from *Moses* to *Christ*. For the covenant with *Abraham* was with him, and with his *seed after him*," **#Ge 17:7**. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made," **#Ga 3:16**. And the apostle in the next verse tells us that (the promises or) the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was (given *by Moses*) four hundred and thirty years after *could* not disannul, that it should make the promise (or covenant with *Abraham*) of none effect; consequently the *Jews*, during the whole period of the law, or *Mosaical* dispensation, were under the covenant with *Abraham*; and into that same covenant the apostle argues, Rom 4, and Gal 3, that the believing *Gentiles* are taken. For which reason he affirms that they are *no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints*, that is, the patriarchs, &c. And that the great mystery, not understood in other ages, was this, *That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body* with his Church and children, the *Jews*, **#Eph 2:19; 3:5, 6**.

\* Being *justified* does not merely signify *being taken into covenant*, so as to be incorporated with the visible Church of God; it is used repeatedly by St. Paul to signify that act of God's mercy whereby a penitent sinner, believing on Christ as a sacrifice for sin, has his transgressions forgiven for Christ's sake **#Ro 5:1**, &c.

65. *Secondly*. Agreeably to this sentiment, the believing *Gentiles* are said to partake of all the spiritual privileges which the *Jews* enjoyed, and from which the unbelieving *Jews* fell; and to be taken into that kingdom and Church of God out of which they were cast. Several of the parables of our Lord are intended to point out this fact; and many passages in the epistles directly prove it.

66. **#Mt 20:1-16**. In this parable the vineyard is the *kingdom of heaven*, into which God, *the householder*, hired the *Jews* early in the *morning*; and into the *same* vineyard he hired the *Gentiles* at the *eleventh* hour, or an hour before sun-set.

67. **#Mt 21:33, 34**. The *husbandmen* to whom the vineyard was first let were the *Jews*; to whom God first sent *his servants*, the prophets, **#Mt 21:34-36**, and at last he sent his Son, whom they slew, **#Mt 21:37-39**, and then the vineyard was let out to *other husbandmen*; which our Saviour clearly explains, **#Mt 21:43**: "Therefore I say unto you, (*Jews*,) the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation (the believing *Gentiles*) bringing forth the fruits thereof." Hence it appears that the very same *kingdom of God*, which the *Jews* once possessed, and in which the ancient prophets exercised their ministry, one after another, is now in our possession; for it was taken from *them* and given to *us*.

68. **#Ro 11:17-24.** The Church or *kingdom of God* is compared to an *olive-tree*, and the members of it to the *branches*. "And if some of the branches (the unbelieving *Jews*) be broken off, and thou (*Gentile Christian*) wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree;" *that is, the Jewish Church and covenant.* **#Ro 11:24:** "For if thou (*Gentile Christian*) wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into the good olive-tree," &c.

69. **#1Pe 2:7-10:** "Unto *you Gentiles* who believe, he (*Christ*) is an honour, τιμή, but unto *them* which be disobedient, (the unbelieving *Jews*,) the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and also a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.\* They stumbled at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed, (they are fallen from their privileges and honour, as God appointed they should, in case of their unbelief.) But *ye (Gentiles,* are raised into the high degree from which they are fallen, and so) are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of the *heathenish* darkness into his marvellous light."

\* We render this passage thus: *A stone of stumbling and rock of offence*, even to them *which stumble at the word, being disobedient*, &c., as if it were one continued sentence. But, thus, violence is done to the text, and the apostle's sense is thrown into obscurity and disorder, which is restored by putting a period after *offence*, and beginning a new sentence, thus: *They stumble* at the word, &c. For observe, the apostle runs a double *antithesis* between the unbelieving *Jews* and believing *Gentiles*.

70. *Thirdly.* The *Jews* vehemently opposed the admission of the uncircumcised *Gentiles* into the kingdom and covenant of God, at the first preaching of the Gospel. But if the *Gentiles* were not taken into the same Church and covenant in which the *Jewish* nation had so long gloried, why should they so zealously oppose their being admitted into it? Or why so strenuously insist that they ought to be circumcised in order to their being admitted? For what was it to them, if the *Gentiles* were called, and taken into another kingdom and covenant, distinct and quite different from that which they would have confined wholly to themselves, or to such only as were circumcised? It is plain the *Gentiles* might have been admitted into *another* kingdom and covenant without any offence to the *Jews*, as they would still have been left in the sole possession of their ancient privileges. And the apostles could not have failed in using this as an argument to pacify their incensed brethren, had they so understood it. But, seeing they never gave the least intimation of this, it shows they understood the affair as the unbelieving *Jews* did, namely, that the *Gentiles*, without being circumcised, were taken into the kingdom of God, in which they and their forefathers had so long stood.

71. *Fourthly.* It is upon this foundation, namely, that the believing *Gentiles* are taken into that Church and kingdom in which the *Jews* once stood, that the apostles drew parallels, for caution and instruction, between the state of the ancient *Jews* and that of the Christians. **#1Co 10:1-13:** "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses, and did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and did all drink of the same spiritual drink; but with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now those things were *our examples*, to the intent *we* should not lust after evil things as *they* also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some



of *them*; neither let us provoke Christ, as some of *them* provoked," &c. #Heb 3:7, &c.: "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day,\* when *or* while you hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me: wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of *you* an evil heart of unbelief." #Heb 4:1, 2: "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of *you* should seem to come short of it. For unto *us* hath the Gospel been preached, as well as to them," that is, we have the joyful promise of a happy state, or of *entering into rest*, as well as the *Jews* of old. #Heb 4:11: "Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

\* σημερον, εαν της φωνης αυτου ακουσητε. EAN, *if*, should here have been rendered *when*, as it is rendered, #1Jo 3:2, and should have been rendered, #Joh 12:32; 14:3; 16:7; #2Co 5:1. In like manner the particle οτι, #Ps 95:7, (whence the place is quoted,) should have been translated WHEN or WHILE. For it is translated *when*, #1Sa 15:17; #Pr 3:24; 4:12; #Job 7:4; 17:16; #Ps 50:18; and might have been so translated in other places.

72. *Fifthly*. Hence also the scriptures of the Old Testament are represented as being written for our use and instruction, and to explain *our* dispensation as well as *theirs*. #Mt 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the *law* and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." And when our Saviour taught his disciples the things pertaining to his kingdom, he *opened to them the Scriptures*, which were then no other than the *Old Testament*; #Lu 4:17-22; 18:31; 24:27: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." #Lu 24:45: "Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." Thus the apostles were instructed in the things pertaining to the Gospel dispensation. And always, in their sermons in the *Acts*, they confirm their doctrine from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. And in their *Epistles* they not only do the same, but also expressly declare that those Scriptures were written as well for the benefit of the *Christian* as the *Jewish* Church. #Ro 15:4: After a quotation out of the Old Testament, the apostle adds: "For whatsoever things were written  *aforetime* were written for our learning; that *we* through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." #1Co 9:9: "It is written in the law of Moses, that thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." #1Co 9:10: "For *our* sakes, no doubt, this is written." #1Co 10:11: "Now all these things (namely, the before-mentioned privileges, sins, and punishments of the ancient *Jews*) happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for *our* admonition, upon whom the ends of the earth are come." #2Ti 3:16, 17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

73. *Sixthly*. Agreeably to this notion, that the believing *Gentiles* are taken into that Church or kingdom; out of which the unbelieving *Jews* are cast, the Christian Church, considered in a body, is called by the same general names as the Church under the Old Testament. *Israel* was the general name of the *Jewish* Church, so also of the *Christian*. #Ga 6:16: "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the *Israel* of God." #Re 7:3, 4: Speaking of the Christian Church, the angel said, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the *servants* of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them that were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty-four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of *Israel*." #Re



**21:10-14:** "He showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, (the Christian Church,) having the glory of God-and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of *Israel*, (as comprehending the whole Church.) And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve *apostles* of the *Lamb*." *Jews* was another running title of the Church in our Saviour's time, and this is also applied to *Christians*. **#Re 2:8, 9:** "And unto the angel of the (Christian) Church in Smyrna, write, I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty; and I know the blasphemy of them who say they are *Jews* (members of the Church of *Christ*) and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." And again, **#Re 3:9.**

§ VI. *The particular honours and privileges of Christians, and the terms signifying these honours explained.*

74. *Seventhly.* In conformity to this sentiment, (namely, that the believing *Gentiles* are taken into that Church, covenant, and kingdom, out of which the unbelieving *Jews* were cast,) the state, membership, privileges, honours, and relations of professed *Christians*, particularly of believing *Gentiles*, are expressed by the same phrases with those of the ancient Jewish Church; and therefore, unless we admit a very strange abuse of words, must convey the same general ideas of our *present* state, membership, honours, and relations to God, as we are professed Christians. For instance:-

75. I. As God *chose* his ancient people the *Jews*, and they were his *chosen* and *elect*, so now the whole body of Christians, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, are admitted to the same honour, as they are selected from the rest of the world, and taken into the kingdom of God, for the knowledge, worship, and obedience of God, in hopes of eternal life. **#Ro 8:33:** "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's *elect*?" &c. **#Eph 1:4:** "According as he hath *chosen* us (*Gentiles*, **#Eph 2:11**) in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." **#Col 3:12:** "Put on, therefore, as the *elect* of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies," &c. **#2Th 2:13:** "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning *chosen* you to salvation; through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." **#Tit 1:1:** "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's *elect*, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." **#2Ti 2:10:** "Therefore I endure all things for the *elect's* sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." **#1Pe 1:1, 2:** "Peter to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, *elect*, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience." **#1Pe 2:9:** "Ye (*Gentiles*) are a *chosen* generation," &c. **#1Pe 5:13:** "The Church that is at Babylon, *elected* together with you, saluteth you."

76. II. The first step which the goodness of God took in execution of his purpose of *election*, with regard to the *Gentile world*, was to rescue them from their wretched situation in the sin and idolatry of their heathen state (by sending his son Jesus Christ into the world to die for mankind, and thus) to bring them into the light and privileges of the Gospel. With regard to which the language of Scripture is: 1st, that he delivered; 2nd, saved; 3rd, bought or purchased; 4th, redeemed them. **#Ga 1:4:** "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might *deliver* us from this present evil world," the vices and lusts in which the world is involved. **#Col 1:12, 13:** "Giving thanks to the Father, who has *delivered* us from the power of (heathenish) darkness, (**#Ac 26:18; #1Pe 2:9; #Eph 4:18; 5:8,**) and

translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." And thus, consequentially, we are "*delivered* from the wrath to come;" **#1Th 1:10**.\*

\* That is, through the redemption that is in Jesus we receive the remission of all our sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost to cleanse, purify, and refine our souls, and thus render them capable of enjoying the inheritance of the saints in light. Our justification, adoption, and sanctification, and finally our admission into the kingdom of glory, are most positively attributed to the sacrificial passion and death of Jesus and we are not *consequentially delivered from the wrath to come*, till our sins are blotted out and our hearts purified from sin; and these blessings we receive from God *through Christ*, i.e. for his *sake*, his *worth* or *merit*; for he has bought these blessings for mankind by his sacrificial passion and death. *Justice* required these to make way for mercy.-A. C. See No. 79.

77. **#1Co 1:18**: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are *saved* it is the power of God." **#1Co 7:16**: "What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt *save* thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt *save* thy wife?" *that is, convert her to the Christian faith.* **#1Co 10:33**: "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be *saved*." **#Eph 2:8**: "For by grace are ye *saved*, through faith." **#1Th 2:16**: "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be *saved*." **#1Ti 2:4**: "Who will have all men to be *saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." **#2Ti 1:9**: "Who hath *saved* us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." In this general sense, *saved* is in other places applied to both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; particularly to the *Jews*, **#Ro 9:27; 10:1; 11:26**. Hence God is styled *our Saviour*. **#Tit 3:4, 5**: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he *saved* us." **#1Ti 1:1**: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our *Saviour*;" **#1Ti 2:3; #Tit 1:3. #Ro 11:11**: "Through their (*the Jews*') fall, *salvation* is come to the Gentiles." And as this *salvation* is by *Jesus Christ*, he also is frequently called our *Saviour*.

78. **#Ac 20:28**: "Feed the Church of God, which he has *purchased* with his own blood." **#1Co 6:19, 20**: "And ye are not your own; for ye are *bought* with a price." **#1Co 7:23**: "Ye are *bought* with a price." **#2Pe 2:1**: "False prophets shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that *bought* them." **#Re 5:9**: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed (*bought*) us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

79. **#Tit 2:14**: "Who gave himself for us, that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity." **#1Pe 1:18**: "Ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain (heathenish) conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ." And at the same time he *redeemed* or bought us from death, or *the curse of the law*; **#Ga 3:13**; and the *Jews*, in particular, from the law, and the condemnation to which it subjected them; **#Ga 4:5**. Hence frequent mention is made of the *redemption* which is in Jesus Christ; **#Ro 3:24; #1Co 1:30; #Eph 1:7; #Col 1:14; #Heb 9:12, 15**. Hence also Christ is said to give himself a *ransom* for us; **#Mt 20:28; #Mr 10:45. #1Ti 2:6**: "Who gave himself a *ransom* for all." That is, that he might redeem them unto God by the *sacrificial* shedding of his blood. See the note under 76.

80. III. As God sent the Gospel to bring *Gentiles, Christians*, out of heathenism, and invited and made them welcome to the honours and privileges of his people, he is said to *call* them, and they are his *called*. **#Ro 1:6, 7:** "Among whom are ye also *called* of Jesus Christ. To all that are at Rome *called* saints;" **#Ro 8:28.** **#1Co 1:9:** "God is faithful, by whom ye were *called* into the fellowship of his Son;" **#1Co 7:20.** **#Ga 1:6:** "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that *called* you;" **#Ga 5:13.** **#Eph 4:1:** "I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are *called*;" **#Eph 4:4.** **#1Th 2:12:** "That ye walk worthy of God, who hath *called* you unto his kingdom and glory." **#1Th 4:7:** "God hath not *called* us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." **#2Ti 1:9:** "Who hath saved us, and *called* us with a holy calling; not according to our works," &c. **#1Pe 1:15:** "But as he which hath *called* you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." **#1Pe 2:9:** "Ye (Gentile Christians) are a chosen generation-to show forth the praises of him who hath *called* you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

81. Note-The *Jews* also were *called*. **#Ro 9:24:** "Even us, whom he has *called*, not of the *Jews* only, but also of the *Gentiles*." **#1Co 1:24; 7:18:** "Is any man *called* being circumcised;" **#Heb 9:15.** But the calling of the *Jews* must be different from that of the *Gentiles*. The *Gentiles* were called into the kingdom of God as *strangers* and *foreigners*, who had never been in it before. But the *Jews* were then subjects of God's kingdom, under the old form; and therefore could be *called* only to submit to it, as it was now modelled under the *Messiah*. Or they were *called* to repentance, to the faith, allegiance, and obedience of the Son of God, and to the hope of eternal life through him; whom rejecting, they were-cast out of God's peculiar kingdom.

82. IV. And as we stand in the relation of children to the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, hence it is that we are his brethren, and he is considered as the first born among us. **#Mt 28:10; #Joh 20:17:** "Jesus saith-Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;" **#Heb 2:11, 17.** **#Ro 8:29:** "That he might be the *first-born* among many *brethren*."

83. V. And the relation of God, as a *Father*, to us *Christians*, who are his *children*, will lead our thoughts to a clear idea of our being, as we are called, the *house* or *family* of God or of Christ. **#1Ti 3:15;** "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the *house* of God, which is the Church of the living God." **#Heb 3:6:** "But Christ, as a Son over his own *house*, whose *house* are we, (*Christians*,) if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." **#Heb 10:21:** "And having a great high priest over the *house* of God," &c. **#1Pe 4:17:** "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the *house* of God, (that is, when the *Christian Church* shall undergo sharp trials and sufferings;) and if it first begin at us, (*Christians*, who are the *house* or *family* of God,) what shall the end be of them that obey not *the Gospel*?" that is, of the infidel world, who lie out of the Church. See **#Ro 1:5; 15:18; #1Pe 1:22.** **#Eph 2:19:** "We are of the *household* (domestics) of God." **#Eph 3:14, 15:** "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole *family* in heaven and earth is named," &c.

84. VI. Farther, as the land of *Canaan* was the *estate* or *inheritance* belonging to the *Jewish family* or *house*, so the *heavenly country* is given to the *Christian house* or *family* for their inheritance. **#Ac 20:32:** "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an *inheritance* among all them which are sanctified." **#Col 3:24:**

"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the *inheritance*." #**Heb 9:15**: "He is the mediator of the New Testament, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal *inheritance*." #**1Pe 1:3, 4**: "God has begotten us again-to an *inheritance* incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." Hence we have the title of *heirs*. #**Tit 3:7**: "That being justified by his grace, we should be made *heirs* according to the hope of eternal life." #**Jas 2:5**: "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and *heirs* of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him?" See #**Ro 8:17**; #**1Pe 3:7**.

85. And as *Canaan* was considered as the *rest* of the *Jews*, so, in reference to our trials and afflictions in this world, heaven is considered as the *rest* of *Christians*. #**2Th 1:7**: "And to you who are troubled, (he will give) *rest* with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." #**Heb 4:1**: "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his *rest*, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us hath the Gospel been preached, as well as to them;" that is, we have the joyful promise of *entering into rest* as well as the *Jews* of old. #**Heb 4:9**: "There remains, therefore, a *rest* for the people of God;" that is, for *Christians* now in this world, as well as for the *Jews* formerly in the wilderness, which is the point the apostle is proving, from #**Heb 4:3-10**.

86. VII. Thus *Christians*, as well as the ancient *Jews*, are the *house* or *family* of God: or we may conceive the whole body of *Christians* formed into a nation, having God at their head; who, on this account, is styled our God, governor, protector, or king; and we his people, subjects, or servants.

87. VIII. And it is in reference to our being a *society* peculiarly appropriated to God, and under his special protection and government, that we are called the *city of God*, the *holy city*. #**Heb 12:22**: "Ye are come unto-the *city* of the living God." #**Re 11:2**: "And the *holy city* shall they tread under foot forty and two months." This city is described in some future happy state; Rev. 21, 26.

88. Hence the whole *Christian* community or Church is denoted by the *city Jerusalem*, and sometimes by *Mount Zion*. #**Ga 4:26**: "But *Jerusalem*, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all."-In her reformed, or future happy state, she is the New Jerusalem; #**Re 3:12**; **21:2**. #**Heb 12:22**: "Ye are come unto *Mount Zion*," &c.; #**Re 14:1**.

89. Hence also we are said to be *written* or *enrolled* in the *book of God*, or, which comes to the same thing, *of the Lamb*, the Son of God. #**Re 3:5**: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the *book of life*." #**Re 22:19**: "And if any man take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the *book of life*, and out of the holy city," &c.; which shows that the names of such as are in the *book of life* may be blotted out, consequently, that to be enrolled there is the privilege of all professed *Christians*.

90. And whereas the believing *Gentiles* were once *strangers*, *aliens*, *not a people*, *enemies*; now (#**Eph 2:19**) "they are no more *strangers* and *foreigners*, but *fellow-citizens* with the saints." #**1Pe 2:10**: "Which in time past were not a *people*, but are now the *people of God*." Now "we are at *peace* with God;" #**Ro 5:1**. Now "we are *reconciled* and become the servants of God," the *subjects* of his kingdom; #**Ro 5:10**; #**1Th 1:9**; #**2Co 5:18, 19**. [That is, all those who have turned to God by true

repentance] [have received remission of sin, and are walking in the way of] [righteousness, with a believing, obedient, loving, and grateful] [heart.-A. C.]

91. On the other hand, the body of the *Jewish* nation, (having, through unbelief, *rejected* the *Messiah*, and the Gospel, and being therefore *cast out* of the city and kingdom of God,) are, in their turn, at present represented under the name and notion of *enemies*. #Ro 11:28: "As concerning the Gospel, they are *enemies* for your sake."

92. IX. The kind and particular regards of God to the converted *Gentiles*, and their relation to *Jesus Christ*, is also signified by that of a *husband* and *wife*; and his taking them into his covenant is represented by his *espousing* them. #2Co 11:2: "For 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."

93. Hence the *Christian Church* or community is represented as a mother, and particular members as her children. #Ga 4:26-28: "But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the *mother* of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more *children* than she which hath a husband. Now we, brethren, as Israel was, are the *children* of promise." #Ga 4:31: "So then, brethren, we are not *children* of the bond-woman, but of the free."

94. Hence also, from the notion of the *Christian Church* being the *spouse* of God in *Christ*, her *corruption* and her *idolatry* come under the name of *fornication* and *adultery*.

95. X. As God, by *Christ*, exercises a particular providence over the *Christian Church*, in supplying them with all spiritual blessings, guiding them through all difficulties, and guarding them in all spiritual dangers, He is their *shepherd*, and they his *flock*, his *sheep*. #Joh 10:11: "I am the good *shepherd*." #Joh 10:16: "And other *sheep* I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one *flock*, and one *shepherd*;" #Ac 20:28, 29; #Heb 13:20. #1Pe 2:25: "For ye were as *sheep* going astray; but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop (overseer) of your souls." 1Pe 5:2-4: "Feed the *flock* of God," &c.

96. XI. Nearly on the same account as God, by *Christ*, has established the *Christian Church*, and provided all means for our happiness and improvement in knowledge and virtue, we are compared to a *vine* and a *vineyard*, and God to the *husbandman*, who planted and dresses it; and particular members of the community are compared to *branches*. #Joh 15:1, 2: "I am the true *vine*, and my Father is the *husbandman*. Every *branch* in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it," &c. #Joh 15:5: "I am the *vine*, ye are the *branches*." #Mt 15:13: "Every *plant* which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." #Ro 6:5: "If we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." #Mt 20:1. The *vineyard* into which *labourers* were hired is the *Christian* as well as the *Jewish Church*: and so #Mt 21:33; #Mr 12:1; #Lu 20:9. #1Co 3:9: "Ye are God's *husbandry*." #Ro 11:17: "And if some of the *branches* (*Jews*) be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree," &c. See also #Ro 11:24.

97. XII. As *Christians* are, by the will of God, *set apart* and appropriated in a special manner to his honour, service, and obedience, and furnished with extraordinary means and motives to holiness, so they are said to be *sanctified*. #1Co 1:2: "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus." #1Co 6:11: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." #Heb 2:11: "For both he that *sanctifieth*, and they who are *sanctified*, are all of one;" #Heb 10:10.

98. XIII. Farther; by the presence of God in the *Christian Church*, and our being by profession *consecrated* to him, *we*, as well as the ancient *Jews*, are made his *house* or *temple*, which God has built, and in which he dwells, or walks. #1Pe 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house," &c. #1Co 3:9: "Ye are God's *building*." #1Co 3:16, 17: "Know ye not that ye (*Christians*) are the *temple* of God, and that the Spirit of God *dwelleth* in you: if any man defile the *temple* of God, him shall God destroy; for the *temple* of God is holy, which *temple* ye are." #2Co 6:16: "And what agreement hath the *temple* of God (the *Christian Church*) with idols? For ye are the *temple* of the living God, as God hath said: I will  *dwell* in them, and *walk* in them." #Eph 2:20-22: "And are *built* upon the foundation of the apostles, &c., Christ Jesus being the chief corner-stone; 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." #2Th 2:4: "So that he, as God, sitteth in the *temple* of God, SHOWING HIMSELF that he is God."

99. XIV. And not only does God, as our king, dwell in the *Christian Church*, as in his *house* or *temple*; but he has also conferred on *Christians* the honours of *kings*; as he has redeemed us from the servitude of sin, made us lords of ourselves, and raised us above others, to *sit on thrones*, and to *judge* and *reign* over them. And he has made us *priests* too, as we are peculiarly consecrated to God, and obliged to attend upon him, from time to time continually, in the solemn offices of religion which he has appointed. #1Pe 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy *priesthood*." #1Pe 2:9: "But ye (*Gentile Christians*) are a chosen generation, a royal (or kingly) *priesthood*." #Re 1:5, 6: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us *kings* and *priests* unto God and his Father," &c.

100. XV. Thus the whole body of the *Christian Church* is separated unto God from the rest of the world. And whereas, before, the Gentile believers were *afar off*, lying out of the commonwealth of *Israel*, now they are *nigh*, as they are joined to God in covenant, have full access to him in the ordinances of worship, and, in virtue of his promise, a particular title to his regards and blessing. #2Co 6:17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be *separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." #Eph 2:13: "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were *afar off*, are made *nigh*, by the blood of Christ."

101. XVI. And as God, in all these respects, has distinguished the *Christian Church*, and sequestered them unto himself, they are styled his *peculiar people*. #Tit 2:14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a *peculiar people*, zealous of good works." #1Pe 2:9: "But ye are a *chosen generation*, a *royal priesthood*, a *holy nation*, a *peculiar people*."

102. XVII. As Christians are a body of men particularly related to God, instructed by him in the rules of wisdom, devoted to his service, and employed in his true worship, they are called his *Church* or *congregation*. #Ac 20:28: "Feed the *Church* of God." #1Co 10:32: "Giving none offence to the *Church* of God;" #1Co 15:9; #Ga 1:13; and elsewhere. #Eph 1:22: "Head over all things to the *Church*:"-and particular societies are *Churches*. #Ro 16:16: "The *Churches* of Christ salute you:"-and so in several other places.

103. XVIII. For the same reason they are considered as God's *possession* or *heritage*. #1Pe 5:3: "Neither as being lords over God's *heritage*, but being ensamples to the flock." The reader cannot well avoid observing that the words and phrases by which our *Christian* privileges are expressed in the *New Testament* are the *very same* with the words and phrases by which the privileges of the *Jewish Church* are expressed in the *Old Testament*; which makes good what St. Paul says concerning the language in which the apostles *declared the things that are freely given to us of God*. #1Co 2:12; 1:3: "We (*apostles*) have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are given to us of God;" namely, the fore-recited privileges and blessings. "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth," not in philosophic terms of human invention, "but which the Holy Spirit teacheth," in the writings of the Old Testament, the only Scriptures from which they took their ideas and arguments, "comparing spiritual things" under the Gospel.

Whence we may conclude: 1. That the holy Scriptures are admirably calculated to be understood in those things which we are most of all concerned to understand. Seeing the same language runs through the whole, and is set in such a variety of lights, that one part is well adapted to illustrate another: an advantage I reckon peculiar to the sacred writings above all others. 2. It follows that, to understand the sense of the Spirit in the *New*, it is essentially necessary that we understand its sense in the Old Testament.

#### § VII. *Reflections on the foregoing Honours and Privileges of the Christian Church.*

From what has been said it appears,—

104. I. That the believing *Gentiles* are taken into that kingdom and covenant in which the *Jews* once stood, and out of which they were cast for their unbelief and rejection of the Son of God; and that we *Christians* ought to have the same general ideas of our present religious state, membership, privileges, honours, and relation to God, as the *Jews* had while they were in possession of the kingdom. Only in some things the kingdom of God under the Gospel dispensation differs much from the kingdom of God under the Mosaical. As, 1. That it is now so constituted that it admits, and is adapted to, men of *all nations* upon the earth, who believe in *Christ*. 2. That the *law*, as a *ministration of condemnation*, which was an appendage to the Jewish dispensation, is removed and annulled under the Gospel. [But the *moral law*, as a rule of life, is still in force.] 3. And so is the polity or civil state of the *Jews*, which was interwoven with their religion, but has no connection with the Christian religion. 4. The *ceremonial* part of the Jewish constitution is likewise abolished, for we are taught the spirit and duties of religion, not by figures and symbols, as sacrifices, offerings, watchings, &c., but by express and clear precepts. 5. The kingdom of God is now put under the



special government of the Son of God, who is the head and king of the Church, to whom we owe faith and allegiance.\*

\* Add to this, that all the privileges under the Gospel are abundantly more *spiritual* than they were under the law-*THAT* being the *shadow*, *THIS* the *substance*. Hence, while we consider these privileges the same in *kind*, we must view them as differing widely in *degree*.-A. C.

105. II. From the above recited particulars it appears that the Christian Church is happy, and highly honoured with privileges of the most excellent nature; of which the *apostles*, who well understood this new constitution, were deeply sensible. **#Ro 1:16**: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." **#Ro 5:1-3**, &c.: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice (*glory*) in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we *glory* in tribulation also," &c. **#Ro 5:11**: "And not only so, but we also joy (*glory*) in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. **#Ro 8:31**: "What shall we then say to these things, If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" **#Ro 9:23, 24**: "He has made known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even on us whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." **#2Co 3:18**: "But we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." **#Eph 1:3, 4**, &c.: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him," &c., &c.

106. And it is the duty of the whole body of *Christians* to *rejoice* in the goodness of God, to *thank* and *praise* him for all the benefits conferred upon them in the Gospel. **#Ro 15:10**: "*Rejoice*, ye Gentiles, with his people." **#Php 3:1**: "My brethren, *rejoice* in the Lord." **#Php 4:4**: "*Rejoice* in the Lord alway; again I say, *rejoice*." **#1Th 5:16**: "*Rejoice* evermore;" **#Jas 1:9**; **#1Pe 1:6, 8**. **#Col 1:12**: "Giving *thanks* unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." **#Col 2:7**: "Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving;" **#1Th 5:18**. **#Heb 13:15**: "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of *praise* to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving *thanks* to his name." **#Eph 1:6**: "To the *praise* of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the Beloved;" **#Eph 1:12, 14**.

107. Farther, it is to be observed that all the foregoing privileges, benefits, relations, and honours belong to *all* professed *Christians*, without exception. God is the God, King, Saviour, Father, Husband, Shepherd, &c., of them *all*. He created, saved, bought, redeemed; he begot, he made, he planted, &c., them *all*. And they are *all* as *created*, *redeemed*, and *begotten* by him; his people, nation, heritage; his children, spouse, flock, vineyard, &c. We are *all enriched* with the blessings of the Gospel, **#Ro 11:12-14**; *all reconciled* to God, **#Ro 11:15**; *all the seed* of Abraham, and *heirs* according to the *promise*, **#Ga 3:29**; *all partake* of the *root* and *fatness* of the *good olive*, the Jewish Church; *all the brethren* of Christ and members of his body; *all* are under grace; *all* have a right to the ordinances of worship; *all* are golden candlesticks in the temple of God, **#Re 1:12, 13, 20**; even

those who, by reason of their misimprovement of their privileges, are threatened with having the candlestick removed out of its place, **#Re 2:5**. Either *every* professed *Christian* is not in the Church, or all the forementioned privileges belong to *every* professed *Christian*; which will appear more evidently if we consider,-

108. III. That all the aforementioned privileges, honours, and advantages are the effects of God's free grace, without regard to any prior righteousness, which deserved or procured the donation of them. It was not for any goodness or worthiness which God found in the *heathen* world, when the Gospel was first preached to them; not for any works of obedience or righteousness which we, in our *Gentile* state, had performed, whereby we had rendered ourselves deserving of the blessings of the Gospel, namely, to be taken into the family, kingdom, or Church of God; by no means. It was not thus of ourselves that we are saved, justified, &c. So far from that, the Gospel, when first preached to us *Gentiles*, found us sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, enemies *through wicked works*, disobedient; therefore, I say, all the forementioned *privileges, blessings, honours, &c.*, are the effects of God's free grace or favour, without regard to *any* prior works or righteousness in the *Gentile* world, which procured the donation of them. Accordingly, they are always in Scripture, assigned to the *love, grace, and mercy* of God, as the sole spring from whence they flow. **#Joh 3:16**: "For God so *loved* the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **#Ro 5:8**: "But God commendeth his *love* to us, in that, while we were *sinners*, Christ died for us." **#Eph 2:4-9, 10**: "But God, who is rich in *mercy*, for his great *love* wherewith he has *loved* us, even when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by *grace* ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his *grace* in his *kindness* towards us, through Jesus Christ. For by *grace* are ye saved, through faith, and that (salvation is) not of yourselves, it is the *gift* of God; not of works, so that\* no man (nor *Gentile* nor *Jew*) can boast. For we (Christians, converted from heathenism) are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them."

\* *ἵνα μη τις καυχησηται*, *lest any man should boast*. So we render it; as if the Gospel salvation were appointed to be *not of works*, to prevent our boasting; which supposes we might have boasted, had not God taken this method to preclude it. Whereas, in truth, we had nothing to boast of. Neither *Jew* nor *Gentile* could pretend to any prior righteousness, which might make them worthy to be taken into the house and kingdom of God under his Son; therefore the apostle's meaning is: "We are not saved from heathenism, and translated into the Church and kingdom of *Christ*, for any prior goodness, obedience, or righteousness we had performed. For which reason, no man can boast, as if he had merited the blessing, &c." This is the apostles sense; and the place should have been translated, *so that no man can boast*. For *ἵνα* signifies *so that*. See **#Ro 3:19**; **#1Co 7:29**; **#2Co 1:17**; **#7:9**; **#Ga 5:17**; **#Heb 2:17**; **6:18**; **#Mr 4:12**.

109. It is on account of this general love that Christians are honoured with the title of *beloved*. **#Ro 1:7**: "To all that are in Rome, *beloved* of God, called *saints*." **#Ro 9:25**: "I will call her (the *Gentile* Church) *beloved*, which was not beloved." **#Col 3:12**: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and *beloved*, bowels of mercies," &c.

110. **#Ro 3:23, 24:** "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his *grace*, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" **#Ro 5:2.** **#1Co 1:4:** "I thank my God-for the *grace* of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." **#Eph 1:6, 7:** "To the praise of the glory of his *grace*, whereby he has made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his *grace*;" **#Col 1:6; #2Th 1:12.** **#2Ti 1:9:** "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own *purpose* and *grace*, which was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began;" **#Tit 2:11; #Heb 12:15.** Hence *grace*, and *the grace of God*, is sometimes put for the *whole Gospel*, and all its blessings. **#Ac 13:43:** "Paul and Barnabas persuaded them to continue in the *grace* of God;" **#2Co 6:1.** **#1Pe 5:12:** "Testifying that this is the true *grace* of God in which ye stand;" **#1Co 1:4; #Ro 5:2; #2Co 6:1; #Tit 2:11; #Jude 1:4. #Ro 12:1:** "I beseech you, therefore, brethren by the *mercies* of God, that ye present your bodies," &c. **#Ro 15:9:** "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his *mercy*." **#1Pe 1:3:** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant *mercy*, hath begotten us again to a lively hope," &c.

111. In these texts, and others of the same kind, it is evident that the love, grace, and mercy of God hath respect, not to *particular persons* in the Christian Church, but to the *whole body*, or whole societies, and therefore are to be understood of that general love, grace, and mercy whereby the whole body of *Christians* is separated unto God, to be his peculiar people, favoured with extraordinary blessings. And it is with regard to this sentiment and mode of speech that the *Gentiles*, who before lay out of the Church, and had not obtained mercy, are said now *to have obtained mercy*, **#Ro 11:30.**

112. Hence also we may conclude that all the privileges and blessings of the Gospel, even the whole of our redemption and salvation, are the effect of God's pure, free, original love and grace, to which he was inclined of his own motion, without any other motive besides his own goodness, in mere kindness and good will to a sinful, perishing world. These are *the things that are freely given to us of God*, **#1Co 2:12.**

#### § VIII. *All the grace of the Gospel is dispensed to us by, in, or through Christ Jesus.*

113. Nevertheless, all the forementioned *love, grace, and mercy* is dispensed or conveyed to us, *in, by, or through* the Son of God, Jesus Christ, *our Lord*. To quote all the places to this purpose would be to transcribe a great part of the New Testament. But it may suffice, at present, to review the texts under the numbers 108 and 110. From which texts it is evident that "the *grace* (or favour) of God is given unto us *by* Jesus Christ;" that he has "shown the exceeding riches of his *grace* in his kindness to us *through* Jesus Christ;" that he has "sent his Son into the world that we might live *through* him;" to be "the propitiation (or mercy seat) for our sins;" that he "died for us;" that "we who were afar off are made nigh *by* his blood;" that God has "made us accepted *in* the Beloved, (*in* his beloved Son,) *in* whom we have redemption *through* his blood, the forgiveness of sins;" that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus;" that, "before the world began, the purpose and *grace* of God (relating to our calling and saltation) was given us *in* Christ Jesus;" "Before the foundation of the world God chose us *in* Christ," **#Eph 1:4.** "We have peace with God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ, *by* whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand," **#Ro 5:1, 2.** "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is *in* his Son," **#1Jo 5:11.** Nothing is clearer, from the whole current

of Scripture, than that all the mercy and love of God, and all the blessings of the Gospel, from first to last, from the *original* purpose and grace of God to our *final* salvation in the possession of eternal life, are *in, by, or through* Christ; and particularly *by his blood*, by the redemption which is *in him*, as he is the propitiation (or atonement) for the sins of the whole world, **#1Jo 2:2**. This can bear no dispute among *Christians*. The only difference that can be must relate to the *manner*-how these blessings are conveyed to us *in, by, or through* Christ. Doubtless they are conveyed through his hands, as he is the *minister* or *agent*, appointed of God to put us in possession of them. But his *blood, death, and cross* could be no *ministering* cause of blessings assigned to his *blood, &c.*, before we were put in possession of them. See **#Ro 5:6, 8, 10, 19; #Eph 2:13, 16; #Col 1:20-29**. Nor truly can his *blood* be possibly considered as a *ministering* or *instrumental* cause in any sense at all; for it is not an *agent* but an *object*, and therefore, though it may be a *moving* cause, or a reason for bestowing blessings, yet it can be no *active* or *instrumental* cause in conferring them. His *blood and death* is indeed to us an *assurance* of pardon; but it is evidently something more; for it is also considered as an *offering* and *sacrifice* to God, highly pleasing to him, to *put away* our *sin*, and to obtain eternal redemption; **#Heb 9:12, 14, 26; #Eph 5:2**.

114. *But why should God choose to communicate his grace in this mediate way, by the interposition, obedience, and agency of his Son, who again employs subordinate agents and instruments under him?* I answer: For the display of the glory of his nature and perfections. The Sovereign Disposer of all things may communicate his blessings by what means and in any way he thinks fit. But whatever he effects by the interposition of means, and a train of intermediate causes, he could produce by his own immediate power. He wants not clouds to distil rain; nor rain nor human industry to make the earth fruitful; nor the fruitfulness of the earth to supply food; nor food to sustain our life. He could do this by his own immediate power; but he chooses to manifest his providence, power, wisdom, and goodness in a variety of ways and dispositions; and yet his power and goodness are not only as much concerned and exercised in this way, as if he produced the end without the intervention of means, but even much more, because his power, wisdom and goodness are as much exerted and illustrated in every single intermediate step, as if he had done the thing at once, without any intermediate step at all. There is as much power and wisdom exercised in producing rain, or in making the earth fruitful, or in adapting food to the nourishment of our bodies-I say there is as much power in any one of these steps as there would be in nourishing our bodies by one immediate act without those intermediate means. Therefore, in this method of procedure, the displays of the Divine providence and perfections are multiplied and beautifully diversified, to arrest our attention, exercise our contemplation, and excite our admiration and thankfulness; for thus we see God in a surprising variety of instances. Nor, indeed, can we turn our eyes to any part of the visible creation, but we see his power, wisdom, and goodness in perpetual exercise, every where. In like manner, in the *moral world*, he chooses to work by means, the mediation of his Son, the influences of his Spirit, the teachings of his word, the endeavours of apostles and ministers; not to supply any defects of his power, wisdom, or goodness; but to multiply the instances of them; to show himself to us in a varied display of his glorious dispensations; to exercise the moral powers and virtues of all the subordinate agents employed in carrying on his great designs, and to set before our thoughts the most engaging subjects of meditation, and the most powerful motives of action. And this method, in the *moral world*, is still more necessary; because, without the attention of our minds, the end proposed, our sanctification, cannot be obtained.\*

\* But it certainly was not merely to display the various operations of Divine Providence, and to multiply the displays of the Divine perfections, that God required the sacrifice and death of his Son: as he was a sacrifice for sin-and the true notion of sacrifice is redeeming the life of a guilty creature by the death of one that is *innocent*-therefore Christ died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, **#1Pe 3:18**. Consequently the justice and righteousness of God required this sacrifice: and *justice* must have required it, else such a sacrifice could not have taken place; for had not *justice* required it, no attribute of God could, without injustice, have demanded it.-A. C.

115. *But how is it agreeable to the infinite distance there is between the most high God and creatures so low and imperfect, who are of no consideration when compared to the immensity of his nature, that he should so greatly concern himself about our redemption?* Answer:-He who is all-present, all-knowing, all-powerful, attends to all the minutest affairs in the whole universe without the least confusion or difficulty. And, if it was not below his infinite greatness to *make* mankind, it cannot be so to *take care* of them, when created. For *kind*, he can produce no beings *more excellent* than the *rational* and *intelligent*; consequently, those must be most worthy of his regard. And when they are corrupted, as thereby the end of their being is frustrated, it must be as agreeable to his *greatness* to endeavour (when he sees fit) their reformation, or to restore them to the true ends for which they were created, as it was originally to create them.

116. And as for mankind being a *mean* and *inconsiderable* part of the creation, it may not be so easy to demonstrate as we may imagine. The *sin* that is or hath been in the world will not do it; for then the beings which we know stand in a much higher, and, perhaps, in a very high rank of *natural* perfection, will be proved to be as mean and inconsiderable as ourselves; seeing they in great numbers have sinned. Neither will our *natural weakness* and *imperfection* prove that we are a mean and inconsiderable part of God's creation: for the Son of God, when clothed in our flesh, and encompassed with all our infirmities and temptations, lost nothing of the real excellency and worth he possessed when in a state of glory with the Father before the world was. Still he was the beloved Son of God, in whom he was well pleased. Besides, since God may bestow honours and privileges as he pleases, who will tell me what *pre-eminence*, in the purpose of God, this world may possibly have above any other part of the universe; or what relation it bears to the rest of the creation? We know that even *angels* have been ministering spirits to some part at least of mankind. Who will determine how far the scheme of *redemption* may exceed any scheme of Divine wisdom in other parts of the universe; or how far it may affect the improvement and happiness of other beings in the remotest regions? **#Eph 3:10, 11**: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." **#1Pe 1:12**: "Which things (that are reported by them that have preached the Gospel) the angels desire to look into." It is therefore the sense of revelation, that the heavenly principalities and powers study the wisdom and grace of redemption, and even increase their stock of wisdom from the displays of the Divine love in the Gospel. Who can say how much our virtue is, more or less, severely proved, than in other worlds; or how far our virtue may excel that of other beings, who are not subjected to our long and heavy trials? May not a virtue, firm and steady under our present clogs, inconveniences, discouragements, persecutions, trials, and temptations, possibly *surpass* the virtue of the *highest angel*, whose state is not attended with such embarrassments? Do ye know how far such as shall have honourably passed through the trials of this life shall hereafter be dispersed through the creation? How much

their capacities will be enlarged? How highly they shall be exalted? What power and trusts will be put into their hands? How far their influence shall extend, and how much they shall contribute to the *good order and happiness of the universe*? Possibly, the faithful soul, when disengaged from our present incumbrances, may *blaze out into a degree of excellency* equal to the *highest honours*, the most important and extensive services. Our Lord has made us *kings* and *priests* unto God and the Father, and we shall sit together in *heavenly places*, and *reign with him*. *To him that overcomes* the trials of this present state, he will give *to sit with him in his throne*. True, many from among mankind shall perish among the vile and worthless for ever: and so shall many of the *angels*. These considerations may satisfy us that, possibly, mankind are not so despicable as to be below the interposition of the *Son of God*. Rather, the surprising condescensions and sufferings of a being so glorious should be an argument that the scheme of redemption is of the utmost importance; and that, in the estimate of God, who alone confers dignity, we are creatures of *very great consequence*. Lastly: *God by Christ created the world*; and if it was not below his dignity to *create*, it is much less below his dignity to *redeem* the world, which, of the two, is the more honourable.

117. It is farther to be observed, that the whole scheme of the Gospel *in Christ*, and as it stands in relation to his *blood, or obedience unto death*, was formed in the council of God, before the calling of *Abraham*, and even before the beginning of the world. #Ac 15:18: "Known unto God are all his works (the dispensations which he intended to advance) from the beginning of the world." #Eph 1:4: "According as he hath *chosen* us in him (*Christ*) before the foundation of the world" (προ καταβολης κοσμου.) #2Ti 1:9: "Who hath saved us and called us, according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in *Christ Jesus* before the world began." #1Pe 1:20: "Who (*Christ*) verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, (προ καταβολης κοσμου.) but was manifest in these last times for you" (Gentiles.) Hence it appears that the whole plan of the Divine mercy in the Gospel, in relation to the method of communicating it, and the person through whose obedience it was to be dispensed, and by whose ministry it was to be executed, was formed in the mind and purpose of God before this earth was created. God, by his perfect and unerring knowledge, foreknew the future state of mankind, and so before appointed the means which he judged proper for their recovery: which foreknowledge is fully confirmed by the promise to *Abraham*, and very copiously by the repeated predictions of the prophets, in relation to our Lord's work, and particularly to his death, with the end and design of it.

118. Again: it is to be noted, that all the forementioned *mercy* and *love*, privileges and blessings, are granted and confirmed to the *Christian Church* under the sanction of a *covenant*; which is a *grant or donation of blessings confirmed by a proper authority*. The Gospel covenant is established by the promise and oath of God, and ratified by the blood of *Christ*, as a pledge and assurance that it is a reality, and will certainly be made good. #Mt 26:28: "This is my blood of the new *testament*" (or *covenant*.) #Lu 22:20: "This cup is the new *testament (covenant)* in my blood." #2Co 3:6: "Made us able ministers of the new *testament*" (*covenant*.) #Heb 7:22: "Jesus made a surety of a better *testament*." #Heb 8:6: "He is the mediator of a better *covenant*, established upon better promises;" #Heb 8:8; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20. Here observe: 1. Jesus is the *surety*, (εγγυος,) sponsor, and *mediator* (μεσιτης) of the new *covenant*, as he is the great agent appointed of God to negotiate, transact, secure, and execute all the blessings which are conferred by this covenant. Obs. 2. That as the covenant is a donation or grant of blessing, hence it is that the *promise* or *promiser*, is sometimes put for *the covenant*; as, #Ga 3:17, 18: "The *covenant* that was confirmed before (to *Abraham*) of

God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the *promise* of none effect: for if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of *promise*. But God gave it to Abraham by *promise*;" and so, #Ga 3:19. Again #Ga 3:21: "Is the law then against the *promises* of God?" #Ga 3:22. Obs. 3. That the Gospel covenant was included in that made with Abraham, #Ge 17:1, &c.; #Ge 22:16-18; as appears from #Ga 3:17; and from #Heb 6:13; "When God made the *promise* to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he *swore* by himself," &c. #Heb 6:17, 18: "He confirmed (μεσολαβῶν, he mediated) it by an *oath*; that by two immutable things (the promise and oath of God) we (*Christians*) might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us."

119. But what should carefully and specially be observed is this, that the Gospel constitution is a scheme, and the most perfect and effectual scheme, for restoring true religion, and for promoting virtue and happiness, that the world has ever yet seen. Upon faith in *Christ*, men of all nations were admitted into the Church, family, kingdom, and covenant of God by *baptism*; were all numbered among the *justified, regenerate or born again, sanctified, saved, chosen, called, saints, and beloved; were all of the flock, Church, house, vine, and vineyard* of God; and were entitled to the *ordinances and privileges* of the Church; had *exceeding great and precious promises given unto them*, especially that of entering into the *rest* of heaven. And in all these blessings and honours we are certainly very happy, as they are *the things which are freely given to us of God*, #1Co 2:12. But because these things are *freely* given, without respect to any *obedience* or *righteousness* of ours, prior to the donation of them, is our *obedience* and *personal righteousness* therefore unnecessary? Or are we, on account of benefits already received, secure of the favour and blessing of God in a future world and for ever? By no means.

120. To explain this important point more clearly, I shall proceed as before, and show that these privileges and blessings, given in general to the Christian Church, are ANTECEDENT blessings; given indeed *freely*, without any respect to the prior obedience of the *Gentile* world, before they were taken into the Church; but intended to be motives to the most upright obedience for the future, after they were joined to the family and kingdom of God. Which effect if they produce, then our *election* and *calling*, our *redemption, adoption, &c.*, are made good: upon which account I shall call them CONSEQUENT blessings; because they are secured to us, and made ours for ever, only in consequence of our obedience. But, on the other hand, if the *antecedent* blessings do not produce obedience to the will of God; if we, his *chosen* people and *children*, do not obey the laws and rules of the Gospel; then we, as well as any other wicked persons, may expect *tribulation and wrath*; then we forfeit all our privileges, and all our honours and relations to God; all the favour and promises given freely to us are of no avail; we *receive the grace of God in vain*, and everlasting death will certainly be our wretched portion.

121. That this is the great end of the dispensation of God's grace to the *Christian Church*-namely, to engage us to duty and obedience, and that it is a *scheme for promoting virtue* and true religion, is clear from every part of the New Testament, and requires a large and particular proof; not because the thing in itself is difficult or intricate, but because it is of great importance to the right understanding of the Gospel and the apostolic writings, and serves to explain several points which stand in close relation to it; as, particularly, that all the forementioned privileges belong to all professed *Christians*, even to those that shall perish eternally. For:-



1. If the apostles affirm them of *all* Christians, to whom they write;
2. If they declare some of those *Christians* who were favoured with those privileges to be wicked, or suppose they might be wicked;
3. If they declare those privileges are conferred by mere grace, without regard to prior *works of righteousness*;
4. If they plainly intimate those privileges are conferred in order to produce true holiness;
5. If they exhort all to use them to that purpose, as they will answer it to God at the last day;
6. If they declare they shall perish, if they do not improve them to the purifying their hearts, and the right ordering of their conversation; then it must be true that these privileges belong to all *Christians*, and are intended to induce them to a holy life. And the truth of all those six particulars will sufficiently appear, if we attend to the Gospels and epistles.

§ IX. *Conclusions from the preceding Discourse.*

122. Though, in the foregoing collection I have faithfully and impartially endeavoured to give the true sense of every text, yet possibly, in some few that are doubtful, I may have erred. But there are so many indisputably plain and full to the purpose as will, I am persuaded, sufficiently justify the following conclusions:—

123. I. That the Gospel is a scheme for restoring true religion, and for promoting virtue and happiness.

124. II. That *election, adoption, vocation, salvation, justification, sanctification, regeneration*, and the other blessings, honours, and privileges, which come under the head of *ANTECEDENT blessings*, do, in a sense, belong at present to all *Christians*, even those who, for their wickedness, may perish eternally.

125. III. That those *antecedent blessings*, as they are offered and assigned to the whole body of *Christians*, do not import an absolute final state of favour and happiness, but are to be considered as displays, instances, and descriptions of God's love and goodness to us, which are to operate as a moral mean upon our hearts. They are a display of the love of God, who is the *FATHER* of the universe, who cannot but delight in the well being of his creatures, and, being perfect in goodness, possessed of all power, and the only original of all life and happiness, must be the *prime* author of all blessedness, and bestow his favours in the most free, generous, and disinterested manner; and therefore those blessings, as freely bestowed antecedently to our obedience, are perfectly consonant to the nature and moral character of God. He has freely, in our first birth and creation, given us a distinguished and eminent degree of being, and all the noble powers and advantage of reason: and what should stop the course of his liberality, or hinder his conferring new and higher blessings, even when we could pretend no title or claim to them? And as the blessings of the Gospel are of the most noble kind, raising us to high dignity, and the most delightful prospects of immortality, they are well

adapted to engage the attention of men, to give the most pleasing ideas of God, to demonstrate most clearly, what nature itself discovers, that he is our FATHER, and to win and engage our hearts to him in love, who has, in a manner so surprising, loved us. By promising the remission of sins, protection and guidance through this world, and the hope of eternal life, every cloud, discouragement, and obstacle is removed; and the *grace of God*, in its brightest glory, shines full upon our minds, and is divinely powerful to support our patience and animate our obedience under temptations, trials, and difficulties; and to inspire peace of conscience, comfort, and joy.

126. IV. These principles ought to be admitted and claimed by all *Christians*, and firmly established in their hearts, as containing privileges and blessings in which they are all undoubtedly interested; otherwise it is evident they will be defective in the true principles of their religion, the only ground of their *Christian* joy and peace, and the proper motives of their *Christian* obedience. Now those principles (namely, our *election, vocation, justification, regeneration, sanctification, &c.*, in *Christ*, through the free *grace* of God) are admitted and duly established in our hearts by FAITH. *Faith*, then, as exercised upon the blessings which God has gratuitously bestowed upon us, is, in our hearts, the foundation of the Christian life; and retaining and exercising this *Christian* virtue of *faith* is called *tasting that the Lord is gracious*, #1Pe 2:3. *Having\** (or holding fast) *grace*, #Heb 12:28. *Growing in grace*, #2Pe 3:18. *Being strong in the grace of Jesus Christ*, #2Ti 2:1. *Holding faith*, #1Ti 1:19; 3:9. *Continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, and not being moved away from the hope of the Gospel*, #Col 1:23. *Holding fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope*, #Heb 3:6. *Holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast*, #Heb 3:14. *Having* (holding) *hope*, #1Jo 3:3. *Hoping perfectly for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ*, #1Pe 1:13. *Giving earnest heed to the things we have heard*, #Heb 2:1. *Having* (holding) *the Son*, or *Christ*, #1Jo 5:12. By these, and such-like phrases, the apostles express our being thoroughly persuaded of, and duly affected with, the blessings included in our *election, vocation, justification, &c.*: or, their being firmly established in our hearts as principles of obedience, to secure our perseverance and final happiness, *through the mighty working of God's power*; to purify our hearts, and to guard us through all our spiritual dangers and conflicts; which power will always assuredly attend every one who *holds faith, grace, and hope*, #1Pe 1:5. Here note, that the *primary object* of faith is not in ourselves, but in God. Not our own obedience or goodness, but the *free grace of God*, is the primary object of faith. But the *fruit* of faith must be in ourselves. The grace or free gift of God is the foundation of faith; and faith is the foundation of the whole life of a true Christian. #2Pe 1:5-7: "Giving all diligence, add to your FAITH virtue," &c. #Jude 1:20: "Building up yourselves on your most holy FAITH," &c.

\* *Εχειν*, to have, in such passages signifies to *keep* or *hold*, as a property or principle for use. #Mt 13:12; 25:29; #Joh 3:29; 5:42; 8:12; #Ro 1:28; 15:4; #1Th 3:6; #1Ti 1:19; 3:9; #Heb 6:9; 9:4; #1Jo 2:23; 3:3; 5:12; #2Jo 1:9.

127. These *antecedent blessings* are the first *principles* of the *Christian* religion; but the first principles of religion must be free from all doubt or scruple, otherwise the religion which is built upon them must sink, as having no foundation. The principles of *natural* religion—that I am endowed with a rational nature, that there is a God in whom I live, move, and have my being, and to whom I am accountable for my actions, are perfectly evident; otherwise the obligations of natural religion would be necessarily doubtful and uncertain. In like manner, the first principles of the *Christian*

religion must be free from all perplexity, otherwise its obligations must be doubtful and perplexed. If it be doubtful whether ever *Christ* came into the world to redeem it, the whole Gospel is doubtful; and it is the same thing, if it be doubtful *who* are *redeemed* by him; for, if he has redeemed we know not *whom*, it is nearly the same thing, with regard to our improvement of redemption, as if he had redeemed no body at all.

128. Faith is the first act of the *Christian* life to which every *Christian* is obliged, and therefore it must have a *sure* and *certain* object to work upon; but if the *love of God* in our *election, calling, adoption, justification*, redemption, &c., be in itself *uncertain* to *any persons* in the *Christian Church*, then faith has no sure nor certain object to work upon with respect to some *Christians*; and consequently, some *Christians* are not obliged to believe; which is false.

129. Farther, the apostles make our *election, calling, adoption, &c.*, motives to obedience and holiness. And therefore these (our *election, calling, adoption, &c.*) must have an existence antecedent to our obedience; otherwise they can be no motive to it. And if only an *uncertain, unknown number* of men be elected to eternal life, no *individual* can certainly know that *he* is of that number; and so, *election* can be no motive to obedience to any person in the *Christian Church*. To confine *election, adoption, &c.*, to some *few* is unchurching the greatest part of the Church, and robbing them of common motives and comforts.

130. Our *election, adoption*, and other *antecedent* blessings, are not of *works*; consequently we are not to work *for* them, but *upon* them. They are not the *effect* of our good works, but our good works are the *effect* of *them*; they are not founded upon our *holiness*, but our *holiness* is founded upon them. We do not procure them by our *obedience*, for they are the effect of *free grace*; but they are *motives* and *reasons* exciting and encouraging our obedience; therefore our *election* is not proved by our *sanctification*, or real holiness. Our real holiness proves that our *election is made sure*; but our *election* itself is proved by the free grace of God.

131. From all this it follows that *we*, as well as the *Christians* of the first times, may claim and appropriate to ourselves all the forementioned *antecedent* blessings without any doubt or scruple. In confidence of hope and full assurance of faith we may boldly say, "the Lord is my helper," and come with boldness to the throne of grace. Our life, even eternal life, is sure to every one of us in the promise of God, and the hands of our *Lord Jesus Christ*. And the business of every Christian is, not to perplex himself with doubts and fears, and gloomy apprehensions, but to rejoice in the Lord, and to do the duties of his place cheerfully and faithfully, in the assured hope of eternal life through *Jesus Christ*, to whom be everlasting glory and praise. Amen.\*

\* This is all right, when the sinner has been led, by a deep knowledge of his lost estate, to seek and find redemption in the blood of the Lamb: then it is his business to rejoice in the Lord and to do the duties of his place cheerfully and faithfully, in the assured hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ. But he must not presume, because he is in a Christian Church, and believes the doctrines of Christianity, that therefore he is safe. He cannot be safe unless Christ be formed in his heart, the hope of glory.-A. C.

132. V. From the preceding collection of texts we may gather that some of the expressions whereby the *antecedent* blessings are signified, such as *elect*, *justify*, *sanctify*, &c., may be used in a double sense; namely either as they are applied to all *Christians* in general, in relation to their being translated into the kingdom of God, and made his peculiar people, enjoying the privileges of the Gospel; or, as they signify the *effects* of those privileges. Wherever any blessing is assigned to all *Christians*, without exception; wherever it is said not to be of *works*; wherever Christians are expected to make a due improvement of it, and threatened with the loss of God's blessing and of eternal life if they do not; there, the expressions which signify that blessing are to be understood in a general sense, as denoting a Gospel privilege, profession, or obligation. And in this general sense, *saved*, *elect*, *chosen*, *justified*, *sanctified*, are *sometimes* used; and *calling*, *called*, *election*, are, I think, *always* used in the New Testament. But when any blessing denotes real holiness as actually existing in the subject, then it *may* be understood in the *special* and *eminent* sense, and always *must* be understood in this sense when it implies the actual possession of eternal life; and in this sense, *saved*, *elect*, *chosen*, *justify*, *sanctify*, *born of God*, are *sometimes* used. #Mt 20:16: "Many are called, but few are chosen" (who make a worthy use of their calling.) #Mt 24:31: "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his *elect*." #Mt 12:36, 37: "In the day of judgment, by thy words thou shalt be *justified*, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." #1Th 5:25: "The God of peace *sanctify* you wholly," &c. #1Jo 2:29: "Every one that doth righteousness is *born of him*." #1Jo 4:7: "Every one that loveth is *born of God*," in the *eminent* sense.

133. The *faith* which gave a person a place or-standing in the Christian Church was a *profession* considered simply and separately from the *fruits* and *effects* of it; but it included a profession of repentance, of forsaking sin and idolatry, and of bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. And it is the *continued* profession of this faith in Christ which gives us a continued right to a place in the Church: for, if we cast off our first faith, we renounce our *profession*, we cease to be *Christians*, or we no longer continue to be the *peculiar* family of God.

134. Here it should be carefully observed that it is very common in the sacred writings to express not only our Christian privileges, but also the duty to which they oblige in the *present* or *preterperfect* tense; or to speak of that as *done*, which only *ought* to be *done*, and which, in fact, may possibly *never* be done. #Mal 1:6: "A son honours (ought to honour) his father." #Mt 5:13: "Ye are (ought to be) the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour," &c. #Ro 2:4: "The goodness of God leads (ought to lead) thee to repentance;" #Ro 6:2, 11; 8:9; #Col 3:3. #1Pe 1:6: "Wherein ye (ought) greatly (to) rejoice." #2Co 3:18: "We all with open face (enjoying the means of) beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are (ought to be-enjoy the means of being) changed into the same image, from glory to glory." #1Co 5:7: "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are (obliged by the Christian profession to be) unleavened." #Heb 13:14: "We seek (we ought to seek, or, according to our profession, we seek) a city to come;" #1Jo 2:12, 15; 3:9; 5:4, 18, and in various other places.

135. The man of true goodness, courage, and greatness of soul, is he who has that *faith which worketh by love*; who lives the life he now lives by *faith in the Son of God*. Such a man is happy under all events. This is he, who while he despises a vain life, has the truest and highest enjoyment of all that can be enjoyed in it. This is the man who alone properly *lives*, for he has nothing but *life*

and *immortality* before him; *death* itself giving no interruption to his life. Blessed, unspeakably blessed is this man. *Such* the Gospel is designed to make us all; and such we all may be, if we do not shamefully neglect the grace of God and our own happiness. But the knowledge and sense of these things are generally lost among those called Christians, to whom the words of the psalmist may be too truly applied: *They are a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways,* **#Ps 95:10.**

136. From all the preceding observations and arguments we may clearly see what is implied in *preaching Christ*. It is not teaching that only a *small, uncertain* number among *Christians* are ARBITRARILY *redeemed, elected, called, adopted, born again, or regenerated*; and that all the rest are, by a *sovereign, absolute, eternal* DECREE, *passed by, or reprobated*. These are no principles of Christianity, but stand in direct contradiction to them, and have drawn a dark veil over the grace of the Gospel, sunk the Christian world into an abject state of fear and a false superstitious humility; and thrown ministers into endless absurdities. "It is such doctrines as these that have misrepresented the Christian religion, harassed the Christian world endlessly, by blending and confounding men's understandings and embittering their spirits; and have been the reason of calling in a false kind of learning, *logic, metaphysics, and school divinity*, in order to give a colour of reason to the grossest absurdities, and to enable divines to make a plausible show of supporting and defending palpable contradictions."-See Dr. *Taylor's* Key to the Apostolical Writings.

## A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

PAUL had never been at *Rome* when he wrote this letter, and therefore it cannot turn upon some *particular points*, to revive the remembrance of what he had more largely taught in *person*, or to satisfy the scrupulous in some things he might not have touched upon at all; but in it we may expect a full account of his Gospel, or those glad tidings of salvation which he preached among the *Gentiles*, seeing this epistle was intended to supply the total want of his preaching at *Rome*.

He understood perfectly well the system of religion he taught, for he was instructed in it by the immediate *revelation of Jesus Christ*, #Ga 1:11; #Eph 3:3; #1Co 11:23; and being also endowed with the most eminent gifts of the Holy Spirit; a man disinterested and quite unbiassed by any temporal considerations, we may be sure he has given us the truth, as he received it from our Lord, after his ascension. On the other hand, he was also well acquainted with the sentiments and system of religion which he opposed, for he was well skilled in *Jewish* literature, having had the best education his country could afford, and having been once a most zealous advocate for *Judaism*. Having frequently disputed with the *Jews* he was thoroughly versed in the controversy, and knew very well what would be retorted upon every point: and therefore we may very reasonably suppose that the queries and objections, which the apostle in this epistle puts into the mouth of the *Jews*, were really such as *had been advanced* in opposition to his arguments.

He was a great genius and a fine writer; and he seems to have exercised all his talents, as well as the most perfect *Christian* temper, in drawing up this epistle. The plan of it is very extensive; and it is surprising to see what a spacious field of knowledge he has comprised, and how many various designs, arguments, explications, instructions, and exhortations, he has executed in so small a compass.

This letter was sent to the world's *metropolis*, where it might be exposed to all sorts of persons, *Heathens, Jews, Christians, philosophers, magistrates*, and the *emperor* himself: and I make no doubt that the apostle kept this in view while he was writing, and guarded and adapted it accordingly.

However, it is plain enough it was designed to confute the *unbelieving* and to instruct the *believing Jew*; to confirm the *Christian* and to convert the idolatrous *Gentile*. Those several designs he reduces to one scheme, by opposing and arguing with the *infidel* or *unbelieving Jew* in favour of the *Christian* or *believing Gentile*.

Upon this plan, if the *unbelieving Jew* escaped and remained unconvinced, yet the *Christian Jew* would be more inoffensively and more effectually instructed in the nature of the Gospel, and the kind brotherly regards he ought to have to the *believing Gentiles*, than if he had directed his discourse plainly and immediately to him. But if his arguments should fail in reference to the *believing Jew*, yet the *believing Gentile* would see his interest in the covenant and kingdom of God as solidly established, by a full confutation of the *Jewish* objections, (which were the only objections that

could, with any show of reason, be advanced against it,) as if the epistle had been written for no other purpose. And thus it is of the greatest use to us at this day.

It is also at present exceeding useful, as it entirely demolishes the engrossing pretensions and imposing principles of the Church of *Rome*. For, a professed faith in *Christ*, and a subjection to *him*, is, in this epistle, fully shown to be the only Gospel condition of a place in his Church, an interest in the covenant of God, and of Christian fellowship. By this extensive principle God broke down the pales of his own ancient inclosure, the *Jewish* Church; and therefore, by the same principle, more strongly forbids the building any other partition wall of schemes and terms of Christian fellowship, devised by human wisdom or imposed by human authority. He then who professes faith in *Christ* and subjection to him is, by the apostle, allowed and demonstrated to be a member of the true visible Church, and to have a right to all its privileges.

Both ancients and moderns make heavy complaints of the obscurity of this epistle, though all agree it is a great and useful performance. *Origen*, one of the fathers, compares our apostle to a person who leads a stranger into a magnificent palace, but, perplexed with various cross and intricate passages, and many remote and secret apartments, shows him some things at a distance, out of an opulent treasury; brings some things near to his view; *conceals* others from it; often enters in at one door, and comes out at another; so that the stranger is surprised, and wonders *whence* he came, *where* he is, and *how* he shall get out. But we shall have a tolerable idea of this princely structure if we observe that it consists of four grand parts or divisions. The *first* division contains the five first chapters; the *second*, the sixth, seventh, and eighth; the *third*, the ninth, tenth, and eleventh; the *fourth*, the five last chapters.

PART I.-Displays the riches of Divine grace, as free to all mankind. *Jews* and *Gentiles* are equally sinful and obnoxious to wrath; and, therefore, there was no way for the *Jew* to be continued in the kingdom of God, but by GRACE, through FAITH; and by grace and faith the Gentile might be admitted into it. To reject this way of justification was to reject the very method in which *Abraham* himself was justified, or interested in the covenant made with him: in which covenant believing *Gentiles* were included, as well as believing *Jews*, and had as great or greater privileges to glory in. But if the *Jew* should pertinaciously deny that, he could not deny that all mankind are interested in the grace of God, which removes the consequences of *Adam's* offence. Through that offence all mankind were subjected to death; and through *Christ's* obedience all mankind should be restored to life at the last day. The resurrection from the dead is, therefore, a part of the grace of God in the Redeemer; and if all mankind have an interest in this part of the grace of God, why not in the whole of it? If all mankind were subjected to death through *Adam's* one offence, is it not much more reasonable that, through the opposite nobler cause, the obedience of the Son of God, all mankind should be interested in the whole of the grace which God has established upon it? And as for law, or the rule of right action, it was absurd for any part of mankind to expect pardon or any blessedness upon the foot of that, seeing all mankind had broken it; and it was still more absurd to seek pardon and life by the law of *Moses*, which condemned those that were under it to death for every transgression.

PART II.-Having proved that believing *Jews* and *Gentiles* were pardoned, and interested in all the privileges and blessings of the Gospel, through mere grace, he next shows the obligations laid upon



them to a life of virtue and piety under the new dispensation. And upon this subject he adapts this discourse to the *Gentile Christians* in the sixth chapter; and in the seventh, and part of the eighth, he turns himself to the *Jewish Christians*; then, from **#Ro 8:12** to the end of the eighth chapter, he addresses himself upon the same head to both *Christian Jews* and *Gentiles*; particularly giving them right notions of the sufferings to which they were exposed, and by which they might be deterred from the duties required in the Gospel; and concluding with a very strong and lively assertion of the certain perseverance of all who love God, notwithstanding any infirmities or trials in this world.

PART III.-Gives right sentiments concerning the rejection of the Jews, which was a matter of great moment to the due establishment of the *Gentile* converts.

PART IV.-Is filled with exhortations to several instances of *Christian* duty; and concludes with salutations to and from particular persons. It will be an advantage to the reader to have this sketch of the epistle ready in his thoughts.

Farther; we cannot enter into the spirit of this epistle unless we enter into the spirit of a *Jew* in those times, and have some just notion of his utter aversion to the *Gentiles*; his valuing and raising himself high upon his relation to God, and to *Abraham*; upon his law and pompous worship, circumcision, &c., as if the *Jews* were the only people in the world who had any manner of right to the favour of God.

And let it also be well noted, that the apostle in this epistle disputes with the whole body of the *Jews*, without respect to any particular sect or party among them, such as *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, &c.; for the grand proposition or question in debate is, *Are WE Jews better than THEY Gentiles?* (**#Ro 3:9**.) And one argument in proof of the negative which the apostle espouses is this (**#Ro 3:29**;) "Is God the God of the *Jews* only? Is he not also of the *Gentiles*? Yes, of the *Gentiles* also." These are the two points through which the line of the apostle's discourse in the third chapter, and consequently in all the argumentative part of the epistle, must necessarily run: and as, both in the *proposition* and in the *argument*, he evidently means the whole body of the *Jews*, in opposition to the whole body of the *Gentiles*, he who doth not give such a sense of the apostle's discourse throughout the argumentative part of the epistle as exactly hits and suits this general, collective notion of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, certainly misses his aim, and shoots wide of the mark.

*Lastly*, the whole epistle is to be taken in connection, or considered as one continued discourse; and the sense of every part must be taken from the drift of the whole. Every sentence, or verse, is not to be regarded as a distinct mathematical proposition or theorem, or as a sentence in the book of *Proverbs*, whose sense is absolute and independent of what goes before or comes after: but we must remember that every sentence, especially in the argumentative part, bears relation to, and is dependent upon, the whole discourse, and cannot be understood unless we understand the scope and drift of the *whole*; and therefore the whole epistle, or at least the eleven first chapters of it, ought to be read over at *once*, without stopping.

As to the use and excellency of this epistle, I shall leave it to speak for itself when the reader has studied and well digested the contents of it. And methinks curiosity, if nothing else, should invite us to examine carefully the doctrine by which (accompanied with the gifts and operations of the

Spirit of God) a few men, otherwise naked, weak, and contemptible, in opposition to the power, learning, and deep-rooted prejudices of the world, confronted and overthrew the *Pagan* religion and idolatry throughout the *Roman empire*: a victory far more difficult and surprising than all the achievements of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*. The fact cannot be denied. And surely the dignity and virtue of the cause must be proportionable to such an unusual and wonderful event. It is certain the world never, either before or since, has seen any thing equal to the writings of the *New Testament*. Never was the love of God, and the dignity to which he has raised the human nature, so clearly shown and demonstrated; never were motives so Divine and powerful proposed to induce us to the practice of all virtue and goodness. In short, there we find whatever ennobles and adorns the mind; whatever gives solid peace and joy; whatever renders us the most excellent and happy creatures; taught, recommended, and enforced by light and authority derived from the only fountain of truth and of all good.

As to the apostle's *manner of writing*, it is with great spirit and force, I may add, perspicuity too; for it will not be difficult to understand him if our minds are unprejudiced and at liberty to attend to the subject he is upon, and to the current Scriptural sense of the words he uses; for he keeps very strictly to the standard of Scripture phraseology. He takes great care to guard and explain every part of his subject; and I may venture to say he has left no part of it unexplained or unguarded. Never was author more exact and cautious in this than he. Sometimes he writes notes upon a sentence liable to exception and wanting explanation, as **#Ro 2:12-16**; here the 13th and 15th verses are a comment upon the former part of it. Sometimes he comments upon a single word, as **#Ro 10:11-13**; the 12th and 13th verses are a comment upon *πᾶς* every one, in the 11th.

He was studious of a perspicuous brevity. **#Ro 5:13, 14**: "For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when law is not in being. Nevertheless death reigned from *Adam* to *Moses*, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of *Adam's* transgression." Surely never was a greater variety of useful sentiments crowded into a smaller compass, and yet so skilfully, that one part very clearly explains another. Hence we learn: 1. That here *imputing of sin* means, men's being subject to death for sin; for it follows, *Nevertheless death reigned*. 2. That *law* is the constitution that subjects the sinner to death; for he saith, *Sin is not imputed when law is not in being*. 3. That *until the law*, is the times before the law of *Moses* was given; for he saith, *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses*. *Until the law*, is the same as *until Moses*. 4. That law was not in being from *Adam* to *Moses*; for having said, *when law is not in being*, he immediately adds, *nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses*. 5. That *Adam* was under the law; for if the law was not in being from *Adam*, or after the dispensation he was under, it is plain it was in being before; or, that law was the dispensation under which God placed *Adam*. 6. That the clause, *even over those that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression*, is not to be understood only of some particular persons, as *infants*, but of all that lived from *Adam* to *Moses*; because none that lived from *Adam* to *Moses* were under the law, and so none could *sin after the likeness of Adam's* transgression. 7. That the law was in being after *Moses*; for it was not in being from *Adam* to *Moses*, which evidently supposes it was in being *afterwards*; and that the *Jews*, from that time, sinned after the likeness of *Adam's* transgression, or were by the law condemned to death for every transgression. 8. Lastly, from the whole it is evident that from *Adam* to *Moses* men did not die for their own personal transgressions, but in consequence of *Adam's* one transgression, which is the point to be proved. One shall hardly find in any other author an *argument* so justly managed, so fully

established, attended with such a variety of instructive sentiments in the compass of thirty words; for setting aside the articles, there are no more in the *Greek*. It is by this unparalleled art that the apostle has brought such a variety of arguments, instructions, and sentiments, all stated, proved, and sufficiently guarded, explained, and defended, within the limits of this letter; which has made it a magazine of the most real, extensive, useful, and profitable knowledge.

He treats his countrymen, the *Jews*, with great caution and tenderness. He had a natural affection for them, was very desirous of winning them over to the Gospel; he knew that their passions and prejudices were very strong for their own constitution; therefore, in his debates with them he avoids every thing harsh, introduces every kind and endearing sentiment, and is very nice in choosing soft and inoffensive expressions, *so far as he honestly could*, for he never flatters, nor dissembles the truth.

His transitions and advances to an ungrateful subject are very dexterous and apposite, as **#Ro 2:1-17; 8:17**.

He often carries on a complicated design, and while he is teaching one thing, gives us an opportunity of learning one or two more. So, **#Ro 13:1-8**, he teaches the duty of *subjects*, and at the same time instructs *magistrates* in their duty, and shows the true grounds of their authority.

He is a nervous reasoner and a close writer, who never loses sight of his subject, and who throws in every colour that may enliven it.

He writes under a deep and lively sense of the truth and importance of the Gospel, as a man who clearly understood it, and in whose heart and affections it reigned far superior to all temporal considerations. See DR. TAYLOR'S Preface to the Romans.

There is so much good sense and sound criticism in the above remarks, that I cannot help considering them of high importance to a proper understanding of this epistle. The apostle's manner of writing is here well vindicated, and proved to be close, nervous, and conclusive; and such a testimony from such a man as Dr. Taylor must, with every unprejudiced reader, outweigh the miserable sentiment of that philosopher who, while professing to hold the same creed with the above writer, has had the awful temerity to say that St. Paul was "an inconclusive reasoner." By such a saying, a man fixes the broad seal to his own incompetency to Judge either of the apostle's writings or doctrine.

In the preceding pages I have borrowed largely from the work of Dr. Taylor, on a full conviction that it is the best ever written upon this subject, that it is indispensably necessary to a proper understanding of the apostolic writings; and that I could not hope to equal it by any production of my own. Those parts of his *Key* which did not fall in with my plan I have taken the liberty to pass by; the rest I have greatly abridged, and only added a few notes where I thought there might be any danger of misapprehending the subject.\*

A. C.

May 21, 1814.

\* On this subject a learned and judicious friend wrote as follows:—

"I find there is a hue and cry raised about Dr. Taylor. I have not yielded to my antagonists, and I will still dare to think for myself. I tell them I would go as far as I can with the pope, or any man; yea, with the devil, when he speaks truth, (which he sometimes does.) If these persons alluded to would attentively read and compare the texts in the Old Testament quoted by Dr. Taylor in his *Key*, it would lead them to a more clear understanding of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans than they ever had before. And I think this *Key* is better than any thing my friend himself could have written upon the subject. But the cry is, 'An Arian, an Arian!' Prejudice shuts up the mind against truth; but let truth be defended wherever it may be found. It is easy to perceive that a certain class of men would reject Dr. Taylor's *Key* because it cuts up the very foundation of their system. Go on in the strength of God; and in all things act with a single eye to his glory. Vive valeque.

J. C.

"13th March, 1815."

**THE  
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO  
THE ROMANS.**

- Year of the Constantinopolitan Æra of the World, 5566.
- Year of the Alexandrian Æra of the World; 5560.
- Year of the Antiochian Æra of the World, 5550.
- Year of the Julian Period, 4768.
- Year of the Usherian Æra of the World, 4062.
- Year of the two hundred and ninth Olympiad, 2.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Roman account, 811.
- Year of the Æra of the Seleucidæ, 370.
- Year of the Cæsarean Æra of Antioch, 106.
- Year of the Julian Æra, 103.
- Year of the Spanish Æra, 96.
- Year from the birth of Christ, 62.
- Year of the vulgar Æra of Christ's nativity, 58.
- Year of the Dionysian Period, or Easter Cycle, 59.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, 2, or the first embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 18.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 11.
- Dominical Letter, A.
- Epact, or the Moon's age at the commencement of the year, 11.
- Jewish Passover, Saturday, March 25.
- Easter Sunday, March 26.
- Year after Bissextile, or Leap-year, 2.
- Year of the reign of the Emperor Nero Cæsar, 5.
- Year of Claudius Felix, the Jewish Governor, 6.
- Year of the reign of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 9.
- Year of Caius Numidius Quadratus, Governor of Syria, 8.
- High Priest of the Jews, Joseph.
- Consuls, Nero Augustus the third time, and Valerius Messala.

**CHAPTER I.**

*St. Paul shows the Romans his Divine call to the apostleship, and for what end he was thus called, 1-6. His salutation to the Church at Rome, and his commendation of their faith, 7, 8. His earnest desire to see them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gifts, 9-15. His description of the Gospel of Christ, 16, 17. The crimes and profligacy of the Gentile world, which called aloud for the judgments of God, 18-32.*

## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

DIFFERENT interpreters have divided this epistle into certain parts or divisions, by which they suppose its subject and matter may be the better understood. Some of these divisions have been mentioned in the preceding *preface*.

The epistle contains *three* grand divisions.

I. The PREFACE, **#Ro 1:1-17**.

II. The TRACTATION, or setting forth of the main subject, including two sections: 1. *Dogmatic*, or what relates to doctrine. 2. *Parænetic*, or what relates to the necessity and importance of the *virtues and duties* of the Christian life. The *dogmatic* part is included in the first *eleven chapters*, the grand object of which is to show that eternal salvation cannot be procured by any *observance* of the Jewish law, and can be hoped for *only* on the *Christian scheme*; for *by the works of the law no man can be justified*; but *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh*, God has accomplished by *sending his Son* into the world, who, becoming an *offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh*. The *parænetic* part commences with **#Ro 12:1**: *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, &c.*; and extends to **#Ro 15:14**.

III. The *peroration* or *epilogue*, which contains the author's apology for writing; his commendation of his apostolical office; his promise to visit them; his request of an interest in their prayers; his commendations of certain persons, and his salutations to others. These points are contained in the succeeding parts of the epistle, from **#Ro 15:14** to **#Ro 16:24**. The 25th, 26th, and 27th verses {**#Ro 16:25-27**} of this chapter evidently belong to another part of the epistle, and should come in, as they do in a vast majority of the best MSS., after **#Ro 14:23**.

For every thing necessary to a *general knowledge* of the epistle itself, see the preceding *preface*.

The inscriptions to this epistle are various in the different MSS. and versions. The following are the principal: *-To the Romans-The Epistle of Paul to the Romans-The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans-The Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Romans*. The word *αγιος*, *holy*, we have translated *saint*; and thus, instead of saying the *holy Paul*, &c., we say *Saint Paul*, &c.; and this is now brought into general use. The older the MSS. are, the more simple the appellatives given to *apostles* and *apostolic men*.

## NOTES ON CHAP. I.

Verse 1. **Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ**] The word *δουλος*, which we translate *servant*, properly means a *slave*, one who is the *entire property* of his master; and is used here by the apostle with great propriety. He felt he was not *his own*, and that his *life* and *powers belonged* to his heavenly *owner*, and that he had no right to dispose of or employ them but in the strictest subserviency to the will of his Lord. In this sense, and in this spirit, he is the *willing slave* of Jesus Christ; and this is, perhaps, the highest character which any soul of man can attain on this side eternity. "I am wholly the Lord's;

and wholly devoted in the spirit of sacrificial obedience, to the constant, complete, and energetic performance of the Divine will." A *friend* of God is high; a *son* of God is higher; but the *servant*, or, in the above sense, the *slave* of God, is higher than all;-in a word, he is a person who feels he has no property in himself, and that God is all and in all.

**Called to be an apostle]** The word *αποστολος*, *apostle*, from *αποστελλειν*, *to send*, signifies simply a *messenger* or *envoy*; one sent on a confidential errand: but here it means an *extraordinary messenger*; one sent by God himself to deliver the most important message on behalf of his Maker;-in a word, one sent by the *Divine authority* to preach the Gospel to the nations. The word *κλητος*, *called*, signifies here the same as *constituted*, and should be joined with *αποστολος*, as it is in the Greek, and translated thus: *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, constituted an apostle, &c.* This sense the word *called* has in many places of the sacred writings; e. g. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called, κληθωμεν*, CONSTITUTED, or *made the sons of God*. As it is likely that no apostle had been employed in founding the Church of Rome, and there was need of much *authority* to settle the matters that were there in dispute, it was necessary he should show them that he derived his authority from *God*, and was immediately delegated by him to *preach* and *write* as he was now doing.

**Separated unto the Gospel]** Set apart and appointed to this work, and to this only; as the Israelites were *separate* from all the people of the earth, to be the servants of God: see **#Le 20:26**. St. Paul may here refer to his former state as a *Pharisee*, which literally signifies a *separatist*, or one *separated*. *Before* he was separated unto the service of his own *sect*; *now* he is separated unto the Gospel of God. On the word GOSPEL, and its meaning, see the preface to the notes on St. Matthew; and for the meaning of the word *Pharisee*, see the same Gospel, **#Mt 3:7**.

Verse 2. **Which he had promised afore]** Both in the *law* and in the *prophets* God showed his purpose to introduce into the world a more *perfect* and *glorious* state of things; which state was to take place by and under the influence of the Messiah, who should bring life and immortality to light by his Gospel.

Verse 3. **Concerning his Son]** That is, the Gospel relates every thing concerning the *conception*, *birth*, *preaching*, *miracles*, *passion*, *death*, *resurrection*, and *ascension* of Jesus Christ, who was of the *seed-royal*, being, as far as his *humanity* was considered, the *son of David*, and then the only *rightful heir* to the Israelitish throne.

Verse 4. **And declared to be the Son of God]** See Clarke's note on "**Ac 13:33**", where this subject is considered at large. The word *ορισθεντος*, which we render *declared*, comes from *οριζω*, to *bound*, *define*, *determine*, or *limit*, and hence our word *horizon*, the *line* that *determines* the farthest visible part of the earth, in reference to the heavens. In this place the word signifies such a *manifest* and *complete exhibition* of the subject as to render it *indubitable*. The resurrection of Christ from the dead was such a *manifest proof* of our Lord's innocence, the truth of his doctrine, and the fulfilment of all that the prophets had spoken, as to leave no doubt on any considerate and candid mind.



**With power]** *ἐν δυνάμει*, With a *miraculous* display of Divine energy; for, how could his body be raised again, but by the miraculous energy of God? Some apply the word here to the *proof* of Christ's *sonship*; as if it were said that he was most manifestly declared to be the Son of God, with such powerful evidence and argument as to render the truth irresistible.

**According to the spirit of holiness]** There are many differences of sentiment relative to the meaning of this phrase in this place; some supposing that the spirit of holiness implies the *Divine nature* of Jesus Christ; others, his *immaculate sanctity*, &c. To me it seems that the apostle simply means that the person called Jesus, lately crucified at Jerusalem, and in whose name salvation was preached to the world, was the *Son of God*, the very Messiah promised before in the holy Scriptures; and that he was this Messiah was amply demonstrated. 1st, By his resurrection from the dead, the irrefragable proof of his purity, innocence, and the Divine approbation; for, had he been a *malefactor*, as the Jews pretended, the miraculous power of God would not have been exerted in raising his body from the dead. 2d, He was proved to be the Son of God, the promised Messiah, by the Holy Spirit, (called here the *spirit of holiness*,) which he sent down upon his apostles, and not on them only, but on all that believed on his name; by whose influence multitudes were convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and multitudes sanctified unto God; and it was by the peculiar unction of this *spirit of holiness*, that the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, **#Ac 4:33**. Thus, then, Christ was proved to be the *true Messiah*, the *son of David according to the flesh*, having the *sole right* to the throne of Israel; and God recognized this character, and this right, by his resurrection from the dead, and sending forth the various gifts and graces of the Spirit of holiness in his name.

Verse 5. **Grace and apostleship]** The peculiar influence and the essential qualifications which such an *office* requires. Without the GRACE, *favour*, and peculiar help of God, he could not have been an apostle: he had an extraordinary conversion, and an extraordinary call to preach the Gospel. Probably *χαριν και αποστολην*, *grace and apostleship*, mean the same as *χαριν της αποστολης*, the *apostolical office*; for so the word *χαρις* means in **#Ro 12:3; 15:15; #1Co 3:10; #Eph 3:8**. See the various acceptations of the word *grace*, **#Ro 1:7**.

**For obedience to the faith]** That by this *office*, which I have received from God, and the *power* by which it is accompanied, I might proclaim the *faith*, the Gospel of Jesus; and show all nations the necessity of believing in it, in order to their salvation. Here is: 1. The Gospel of the Son of God. 2. An apostle divinely commissioned and empowered to preach it. 3. The necessity of faith in the name of Jesus, as the only Saviour of the world. 4. Of obedience, as the necessary consequence of genuine faith. And, 5. This is to be proclaimed among all nations; that all might have the opportunity of believing and being saved.

Verse 6. **Ye are the called]** Ye Romans are all *invited* to believe in Christ Jesus, for the salvation of your souls; and to you, with the rest, my apostolical mission extends. This appears to be the most obvious sense of the word *called* in this place—to be *called by the Gospel* is to be *invited* to believe in Christ Jesus, and become his disciples. The word sometimes means *constituted*, or *made*, as in **#Ro 1:1**.

Verse 7. **Called to be saints]** Invited to become holy persons, by believing the Gospel and receiving the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Or, here, the word may have the meaning of *made or constituted*, as above; *κλητοις αγιους*, *to all that be in Rome*, CONSTITUTED *saints*, for they had already received the Gospel grace, and were formed into a Christian Church.

**Grace to you]** *χαρις υμιν*; May you be partakers of the *Divine favour*, the *source* whence every blessing is derived.

I think it necessary, once for all, to give the several acceptations of this word grace which occur in the sacred writings.

1. The word *χαριν* signifies in general *favour* or *benevolence*, but especially that *favour* which is *powerful* and *active*, and loads its objects with *benefits*. #Lu 1:30: *Fear not, Mary, thou hast found FAVOUR, χαριν, with God.* #Lu 2:40: *And the child grew-and the GRACE of God, χαρις θεου, the favour of God was upon him.* #Lu 1:52: *And Jesus increased in FAVOUR, χαριτι GRACE, with God and man.* #Ac 2:47: *Having FAVOUR, χαριν, GRACE, with all the people.* #Ac 4:33: *And great GRACE, χαρις, FAVOUR, was upon them all.* The apostles were at that time in universal *favour* with the multitude. In this sense the word occurs in a great variety of places, both in the Old and New Testaments.

2. Hence it is often used for the *blessing* which it *dispenses*; for, if God be *favourably disposed* towards a person, his *beneficent* acts, in that person's behalf, will be a necessary consequence of such *favour*. #Joh 1:14: *Full of GRACE and truth*; accomplished in all spiritual blessings. #Joh 1:16: *And GRACE upon GRACE*: he who is full of the most excellent blessings, confers them *liberally* on all believers. #Ac 11:23: *When he had seen the GRACE of God*, i.e. had the fullest evidence that they were richly endowed with heavenly gifts. #1Co 1:4: *For the GRACE of God which is given you-the Divine blessings conferred upon you.* #2Co 9:8: *God is able to make all GRACE abound toward you*; i.e. to enrich you with every benediction. This is also a very common acceptation of the word; and in this sense the word *grace* or *favour* is now generally understood among religious people. The *grace of God* meaning with them some *Divine or spiritual blessing communicated*.

3. It is sometimes taken for the whole of the *Christian religion*, as being the grandest possible display of God's *favour* to a lost, ruined world: and in this sense it appears to be used, #Joh 1:17: *For the LAW was given by Moses; but GRACE and truth came by Jesus Christ*: where the term GRACE is evidently opposed to LAW; the latter meaning the *Mosaic*, the other the *Christian*, dispensation. #Ac 13:43: *Barnabas persuaded them to continue in the GRACE of God*; i.e. to hold fast their profession of the religion of Christ. #Ro 6:14: *Ye are not under the LAW, but under GRACE*-ye are no longer under obligation to fulfil the Mosaic precepts, but are under the *Christian dispensation*. See also #Ro 6:15; and see #2Co 1:12; 6:1; #Ga 1:6; #Col 1:6; #2Ti 2:1; #Tit 2:11: *The GRACE of God, that bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared.* The Jewish religion was restricted in its *benefits* to a *few*; but the *Christian religion* proposes the salvation of *all men*; and the author of it has become a sacrifice for the sins of the *whole world*. #Heb 12:15: *Looking diligently lest any man fall from the GRACE of God*-lest any man apostatize from the Christian religion, and the blessings of pardon and holiness which he has received through it. #1Pe 5:12: *This is the true GRACE of God wherein ye stand*-the *Christian religion* which ye have received is the *genuine* religion of God.

4. It signifies all the *blessings* and *benefits* which Christ has *purchased*, and which he gives to true believers, both in *time* and *eternity*. See **#Ro 5:15, 17**, where the *grace* of God is opposed to *death*; i.e. to all the wretchedness and misery brought into the world by Adam's transgression. **#1Co 16:23**: *The GRACE of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all*-May every blessing purchased by Christ's passion and death be the portion of you all. **#Ga 5:4**: *Ye are fallen from GRACE*-ye have lost the blessings of the Gospel by submitting to circumcision.

5. It signifies the *apostolic* and *ministerial office*, or the authority to propagate the Christian religion, and the unction or influence by which that office is executed; so in the 5th verse of this chapter, {**#Ro 1:5**} as has been already noted: *By whom we have received GRACE and apostleship, or, the apostolic office*. **#Ro 13:3**: *I say, through the GRACE given unto me*; i.e. I command you, by the *authority* of my *apostolic office*, &c. See also **#Ro 13:6**.

6. It signifies a *gift*, salary, or money collected for the use of the poor. **#1Co 16:3**: *Whomsoever ye shall approve-they will I send to bring your LIBERALITY*, *την χάριν υμῶν*, your GRACE; i.e. the *collection* made for the poor saints: see **#1Co 16:1**. **#2Co 8:4**: *Praying us-that we would receive the GIFT*, *την χάριν*, the GRACE, the *contribution* made in the Churches of Macedonia, for the relief of the poor. In this sense it is used in Ecclus. xvii. 22: *He will keep the GOOD DEEDS of man*, *χάριν*, the same as *ἐλεημοσύνη*, *alms*, in the beginning of the verse; and it signifies a kind or *friendly act*, in the same author. Ecclus. xxix. 16: *Forget not the FRIENDSHIP*, *χαριτας*, of thy surety. GRACES or *χαρις*, was a deity among the ancients; and the *three GRACES*, *αι τρεις χαριτες*, were called *Pitho*, *Aglaia*, and *Euphrosyne*; *πειθω*, mild *persuasion*; *αγλαια*, *dignity*; *ευφροσύνη*, *liberality* and *joyfulness*; and these were always painted *naked*, to show that all *benefits* should be *gratuitous*, this being essential to the nature of a *gift*. See Suidas, in *χαριτας*.

7. It sometimes signifies merely *thanks* or *thanksgiving*. See **#Lu 17:9**: *Doth he thank*, *μη χάριν εχει*, *that servant?* **#Ro 6:17**: *But God be THANKED*, *χαρις οε τω θεω*. **#1Co 10:30**: *For if I by GRACE*, *χαριτι*, *THANKSGIVING*, as our *margin* has it, and properly.

8. It signifies *remuneration*, *wages*, or *reward* **#Lu 6:32-34**: *If ye love them that love you-do good to them which do good to you-lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what THANK have ye?* *ποια υμιν χάρις εστι*; *what REWARD have ye?* This appears, from the parallel place, **#Mt 5:46**, to be most evidently the meaning: *τινα μισθον εχετε*; *what REWARD have ye?* The word is used in this sense by several Greek writers.

9. It signifies whatever is the *means* of *procuring* the *favour* or *kindness* of another. **#1Pe 2:19, 20**: *For this is THANKWORTHY*, *τουτο γαρ χάρις παρα τω θεω*, this is the *means* of *PROCURING FAVOUR from God*.

10. It signifies *joy*, *pleasure*, and *gratification*, which is the, meaning of *χαρα*, and with which it is often confounded in the New Testament. **#Phm 1:7**: *For we have great JOY*, *χαριν γαρ εχομεν πολλην*. Tobit vii. 18: *The Lord give thee JOY*, *χαριν*, *for this thy sorrow*. In this sense the word is used by the best Greek writers; and in this sense it appears to be used, **#2Co 1:15**.

11. It signifies the *performance* of an act which is *pleasing* or *grateful* to others. #Ac 24:27: *Felix, willing to show the Jews a PLEASURE*, χαριτας καταθεσθαι, to perform an act which he knew would be highly *gratifying* to them.

12. It signifies *whatever has the power or influence to procure favour*, &c. Suavity, kindness, benevolence, gentle demeanour. #Lu 4:22: *All wondered at the GRACIOUS WORDS*, τοις λογοις της χαριτος, the *benevolent, kind, and tender expressions*; such as his text, #Lu 4:18, would naturally lead him to speak. *He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, &c.* #Eph 4:29; #Col 4:6: *Let your speech be always with GRACE*; i.e. *gracious, kind, benevolent*, savouring of the *doctrine* of Christ: it is thus used by several Greek writers. See Schleusner. As the word χαρις GRACE, most frequently signifies some *blessing* or *benefit* calculated to promote human *happiness*, it is generally derived from χαρω, *I rejoice*, because of the effect produced by the blessing.

**And peace]** ειρηνη, the same as שלום shalom in Hebrew, generally signifying all *kinds of blessing*, but especially *harmony and unity*, and the *bond* of such *unity*. The most probable derivation of the word ειρηνη is from ειρω, *I bind*, and ει, *one*-because peace unites and binds those who were, by discord, before *disunited*. In the New Testament it signifies-1. *Peace*, public or private, in the general acceptation of the word, as implying *reconciliation* and *friendship*; and to the etymology of the word the apostle seems to allude in #Eph 4:3: *Endeavouring to keep the UNITY of the Spirit in the BOND of PEACE*. #Ac 12:20: *They of Tyre and Sidon desired PEACE*-they sought *reconciliation*, with Herod, by means of Blastus, the king's chamberlain.

2. It signifies *regularity, good order*. #1Co 14:33: *God is not the God of confusion, but of PEACE*.

3. It signifies the *labour* or *study* of preserving *peace* and *concord*; and this is supposed to be its meaning, #Mt 10:34; #Lu 12:51; and #Ac 7:26. #Ro 14:17: *For the kingdom of God is righteousness and PEACE*-the Christian dispensation admits of no *contention*, but inculcates *peace*. #1Co 7:15: *God hath called us to PEACE*-to *labour* to preserve *quietness* and *concord*. #Heb 12:14: *Follow PEACE-labour* to preserve it.

4. It signifies the *author* or *procurer* of *peace* and *concord*. #Eph 2:14: *He is our PEACE*-the *author* of concord betwixt Jews and Gentiles.

5. It signifies the *Gospel* and its *blessings*. #Eph 2:17: *And came and preached PEACE to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh*.

6. It signifies all kinds of *mental* and *corporeal happiness*, and especially the happiness of Christians. #Lu 1:79: *To guide our feet into the way of PEACE*-to show us the way to obtain *true happiness*. #Lu 19:42: *The things which belong unto thy PEACE*-that by which thou mightest have been made truly happy. #1Th 5:23: *The very God of PEACE*-God, the only source of true felicity. #Joh 16:33: *These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have PEACE*-that ye might have confidence and happiness in believing on me as your only Saviour.

7. It signifies *good wishes and affectionate prayers*. #Mt 10:13: *And if the house be worthy, let your PEACE come upon it*. Our Lord commands his disciples, #Mt 10:12, to *salute* the house into which they entered; and this was done by saying, *Peace be unto this house!* that is, Let every blessing, *spiritual and temporal*, be the portion of this family! See #Lu 10:6; #Joh 14:27; #Ac 15:33: *They were let go in PEACE*-they had the most *fervent and affectionate prayers* of the Church.

8. It signifies *praise*. #Lu 19:38: *PEACE in heaven and glory in the highest!*-May all the heavenly host praise God, and give him the highest honour!

9. It signifies *benignity, benevolence, favour*. #Ro 5:1: *Being justified by faith, we have PEACE with God*-In consequence of having our sins forgiven, we have a clear sense of the Divine *favour*. #Php 4:7: *The PEACE of God which passeth all understanding*-the inexpressible blessedness of a *sense* of the Divine *favour*. See *Schleusner's Lexicon*.

**From God our Father]** The apostle wishes them all the blessings which can flow from GOD, as the *fountain of grace*, producing in them all the *happiness* which a heart filled with the *peace of God* can possess; all of which are to be communicated to them through the Lord Jesus Christ. See **Clarke's note on "Ac 28:31"**.

Verse 8. **First, I thank my God]** From this to the end of #Ro 1:17 belongs to the *preface*, in which the apostle endeavours to conciliate the good opinion of the Christians at Rome, and to prepare their minds for his reproofs and exhortations.

**Your faith is spoken]** καταγγέλλεται, is celebrated, *throughout the whole world*-in every place where the Christian religion is professed, through all parts of the *Roman dominions*; for in this sense we should understand the words, the *whole world*.

Verse 9. **Whom I serve with my spirit]** λατρεύω Whom *I worship* with the *profoundest religious reverence*; for so the original certainly means: I not only employ all the powers of my *body* in this service, but all those of my *soul*; being thoroughly convinced of the *absolute truth* of the religion I preach. Probably St. Paul opposes, in this place, the *spiritual* worship of the Gospel to the *external*, or what some call the *carnal*, worship of the Jews. Mine is not a religion of *ceremonies*, but one in which the *life* and *power* of the *eternal Spirit* are acknowledged and experienced.

Verse 10. **Making request, &c.]** By this we see how earnestly the apostle longed to see Rome. It had long been a subject of continual prayer to God, that he might have a prosperous journey to, or rather *meeting* with, them, for so we should understand the word εὐδοωθημαί: that he had a prosperous *meeting* with them we cannot doubt; that he had a disastrous journey to them the 27th of the Acts fully proves.

Verse 11. **Some spiritual gift]** This probably means some of the *extraordinary gifts* of the Holy Spirit, which, being given to them, might tend greatly to establish their faith in the Gospel of Christ; and it is very likely that such gifts were only conferred by means of *apostles*; and as the *apostle* had not yet been at Rome, consequently the Roman Christians had not yet received any of these



miraculous gifts, and thus they differed widely from all the other Churches which had been raised by the apostle's ministry.

Verse 12. **That I may be comforted together with you]** He here, with great address, intimates that he longs for this opportunity, as well on his *own account* as on *theirs*, and to show them that he arrogates nothing to himself; for he intimates that it will require the conjoint action of *their faith* as well as *his own*, to be the means of receiving those blessings from God to which he refers.

Verse 13. **But was let hitherto]** The word *let*, from the Anglo-Saxon, [Anglo-Saxon] to *hinder*, signifies *impediment* or *hinderance* of any kind: but it is likely that the original word, *εκωλυθην*, *I was forbidden*, refers to a *Divine prohibition*:-he would have visited them long before, but God did not see right to *permit* him.

Verse 14. **I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians]** It has been remarked before that all the nations of the earth, themselves excepted, were termed *barbarians* by the *Greeks*. See the origin of the word *barbarous* in the note on **#Ac 28:2**. The apostle considers himself, by his apostolical office and call, under obligation to preach the Gospel to *all people*, as far as the providence of God might open his way; for this is implied in the Divine commission:-*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature-to the wise and the unwise; to the learned and cultivated as well as to the unlearned and uncultivated*. This evidently appears to be the import of the terms.

Verse 15. **I am ready to preach]** *προθυμον*; I have a *ready* mind. I was only prevented by the providence of God from visiting you long *ago*. His time is best: in the mean time I write, by his direction, to comfort and instruct you.

Verse 16. **I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ]** This text is best illustrated by **#Isa 28:16; 49:23**, quoted by the apostle, **#Ro 10:11**: For the Scripture saith, *Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed*; i.e. they shall neither be *confounded*, nor *disappointed* of their hope. The *Jews*, by not believing on Jesus Christ, by not receiving him as the promised Messiah, but trusting in others, have been *disappointed*, *ashamed*, and *confounded*, from that time to the present day. Their expectation is cut off; and, while rejecting Christ, and expecting *another* Messiah, they have continued under the displeasure of God, and are *ashamed* of their confidence. On the other hand, those who have believed on Christ have, in and through him, all the blessings of which the prophets spoke; every promise of God being *yea* and *amen* through him. Paul, as a Jew, believed on Christ Jesus; and in believing he had life through his name; through him he enjoyed an abundance of grace; so that, being filled with that happiness which an indwelling Christ produces, he could cheerfully say, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*. And why? Because he felt it to be *the power of God to the salvation* of his believing soul. This appears to be the true sense of this passage, and this interpretation acquires additional strength from the consideration that St. Paul is here most evidently addressing himself to the *Jews*.

**It is the power of God unto salvation]** *δυναμις γαρ θεου εστιν*: The *almighty power* of God accompanies this preaching to the souls of them that believe; and the consequence is, they are *saved*; and what but the *power of God* can save a *fallen, sinful* soul?

**To the Jew first]** Not only the Jews have the *first* offer of this Gospel, but they have the *greatest* need of it; being so *deeply fallen*, and having sinned against such *glorious privileges*, they are much more culpable than the Gentiles, who never had the light of a Divine revelation.

**And also to the Greek]** Though the salvation of God has hitherto been apparently *confined* to the Jewish people, yet it shall be so no longer, for the Gospel of Christ is sent to the *Gentiles* as well as the *Jews*; God having put no difference between them; and Jesus Christ having *tasted death for EVERY man*.

Verse 17. **For therein]** In the Gospel of Christ.

**Is the righteousness of God]** God's method of saving sinners.

**Revealed from faith to faith]** Shown to be by *faith*, and not by the works of *any* law; for Abraham, the father and founder of the Jewish people, was *justified by faith*, before even the law was given; and by believing, in reference to the spiritual object held forth in the various ordinances of the law, and now revealed under the Gospel, he and all his believing descendants have been justified. And thus the faith of the old covenant led on to the faith of the new covenant, which shows that salvation has been *by faith* from the call of Abraham to the present time. And, from the beginning, all that were *just* or *righteous* in the earth became such by *faith*, and by this principle alone they were enabled to persevere; as it is written, *The just shall live by faith*. That δικαιοσύνη, which we translate *righteousness* in this verse, signifies *God's method of saving mankind by faith in Christ*, is fully evident from the use of the term in **#Ro 9:30**: *The Gentiles which followed not after RIGHTEOUSNESS—who had no knowledge by revelation, of God's method of justifying and saving sinners, have attained to RIGHTEOUSNESS—have had imparted to them God's method of salvation by faith in Christ.* **#Ro 9:31**: *But Israel, the Jews, which followed after the law of righteousness—that law, the end or object of which is CHRIST, and through him justification to all that believe (#Ro 10:4,) have not attained to the law of righteousness—have not found out the genuine plan of salvation, even in that law which so strongly and generally proclaims justification by faith. And why have they not found it? #Ro 9:32: Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law—they did not discern that even its works or prescribed religious observances were intended to lead to faith in that glorious Mediator of whom they were the types and representatives; but the Jews trusted in the observances themselves, hoping to acquire justification and final salvation by that means. For they stumbled at the stumbling-stone—at the doctrine of Christ crucified as the only sure ground on which the expectation of future salvation can be founded. Therefore, being ignorant of God's righteousness—God's method of saving sinners, and going about to establish their own righteousness—their own method of salvation, by the observance of those rites and ceremonies which should have led them by faith to Christ, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God—they would not submit to be saved in God's way, and therefore rejected, persecuted, and crucified the Lord Jesus; see #Ro 10:3. This collation of passages most evidently shows that the word righteousness here means simply God's method of saving sinners, or God's way of salvation, in opposition to the ways and means invented by the fancies or prejudices of men.*

There are few words in the sacred writings which are taken in a greater variety of acceptations than the word צדקה *tsedakah* in Hebrew, and δικαιοσύνη in Greek, both of which we generally



translate *righteousness*. Our English word was originally *rightwiseness*, from the Anglo-Saxon, [Anglo-Saxon], *justice, right*, and [Anglo-Saxon], *to know*; and thus the *righteous* man was a person who was allowed to *understand* the claims of *justice* and *right*, and who, knowing them, acted according to their dictates. Such a man is *thoroughly wise*; he aims at the attainment of the *best end* by the use of the *best means*. This is a true definition of *wisdom*, and the righteous man is he that *knows* most and acts *best*. The Hebrew צדק *tsadak*, in its ideal meaning, contains the notion of a *beam* or *scales* in *equipoise*, what we call *even balance*; and it is well known that in all the personifications of Justice, both ancient and modern, she is represented as a beautiful female with a bandage on her eyes, and a beam and scales in her hand, so perfectly poised that neither end preponderates.

The Greek word δικαιοσύνη has been derived from διχαζω, to *divide*; and hence δικη, *justice*, because it is the property of this virtue to *divide* to each his *due*. With other etymologies it is useless to trouble the reader. Both the noun δικαιοσύνη and the verb δικαιοω have a great variety of meaning in the New Testament; but they are all reducible to this original idea, *acting* according to the requisitions of *justice* or *right*. It may not be improper to notice some of the chief of these acceptations in this place.

1. The act of *distributing* to each man his *due* is the sense of the word, #Ac 17:31: *He will judge the world in RIGHTEOUSNESS*, i.e. according to the principles of eternal justice and rectitude. See also #Re 19:2: *In RIGHTEOUSNESS doth he judge and make war*.

2. It signifies a *holy life*, as proceeding from *piety* towards God. #Lu 1:75: *Might serve him in holiness and RIGHTEOUSNESS all the days of our life*.

3. It signifies *benignity, liberality*, and particularly *almsgiving*, as justice and righteousness require us, being only *stewards* of God's bounty, to share it with the necessitous. #Mt 6:1: *Take heed that ye do not your ALMS, δικαιοσύνην, your RIGHTEOUSNESS, before men*. #Ro 3:5: *But if our unrighteousness commend the RIGHTEOUSNESS, the benignity of God*. #2Co 9:10: *Increase the fruits of your RIGHTEOUSNESS, i.e. of your liberality*.

4. It signifies God's *method of saving sinners*; the way which is agreeable to his *righteousness* and *liberality*. See the former part of this note, and the scriptures there referred to.

5. It signifies the *reward* or *issue* of *liberality*. #2Co 9:9: *He hath scattered abroad; he hath given to the poor; his RIGHTEOUSNESS-the reward of his bounty, remaineth for ever*. See #Ps 112:9.

6. It signifies the whole collection of *graces*, which constitute the complete Christian character. #Mt 5:6: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after RIGHTEOUSNESS-they who ardently long for the full salvation of God*. #Mt 5:10, 20: *If your RIGHTEOUSNESS exceed not the righteousness, &c*. #Mt 6:33: *Seek the kingdom of God and his RIGHTEOUSNESS*.

7. It signifies the *result* of *faith* in God and *submission to his will*, exemplified in a holy and useful life. #Heb 11:7: *By faith Noah prepared an ark, and became heir of the RIGHTEOUSNESS which is by faith-he escaped the deluge and became the instrument of repopling the world*.

8. It signifies an *exact observance of religious ordinances and precepts*. #**Php 3:6**: *Touching the RIGHTEOUSNESS which is of the law, blameless*-having lived in an exact conformity to all the Mosaic precepts. In this sense it is to be understood, #**Mt 3:15**: *Thus it becomes us to fulfil all RIGHTEOUSNESS*-to observe every precept of the law.

9. It signifies the *favour or pardoning mercy* of God. #**Ro 4:6**: *The blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth RIGHTEOUSNESS*—without works—the man is happy to whom God has granted the remission of sins, without respect to his observance of the law of Moses.

10. In #**2Co 5:21**, *δικαιοσύνη*, *righteousness*, is put for *δικαιός*, *righteous*: *That we might become the righteousness of God*-that we might receive such a righteousness or holiness, such a salvation, as is worthy of God's grace to impart, and such as the necessities of mankind require.

A few of the leading acceptations of the verb *δικαιόω*, which we translate to *justify*, may be here properly subjoined, as this verb is so repeatedly used in this epistle.

1. It signifies so *declare* or *pronounce* one *just* or *righteous*; or, in other words, to declare him to be *what he really is*. #**1Ti 3:16**: *He was JUSTIFIED in the Spirit*.-By the almighty power of the Spirit he was *proved* to be the TRUE MESSIAH.

2. To *esteem* a thing *properly*. #**Mt 11:19**: *Wisdom is JUSTIFIED of her children*.-Wisdom, propriety of conduct, is properly *estimated* by wise men.

3. It signifies to *approve*, *praise*, and *commend*. *The publicans JUSTIFIED God*, #**Lu 7:29**; praised him for calling them to such a state of salvation. #**Lu 16:15**: *Ye are they which JUSTIFY yourselves before men*-Ye are self-commended, self-applauded, and self-praised. In this sense it is often used in the Greek apocryphal books. Ecclus. vii. 5: *JUSTIFY not thyself before the Lord*-Do not applaud thyself in the presence of thy-Maker. Ib. x. 29: *Who will JUSTIFY (praise or applaud) him that sinneth against his own soul*. Ib. xviii. 2: *The Lord only is righteous, δικαιωθησεται*, shall be JUSTIFIED, i.e. *praised*, because *there is none other but he*.

4. The verb *δικαιόομαι* is used to *clear from all sin*. #**1Co 4:4**: *For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby JUSTIFIED*-A man's own consciousness of *integrity* is not a proof that he is clear from all sin in the sight of God.

5. A judge is said to *justify* not only when he *condemns* and *punishes*, but also when he *defends* the cause of the innocent. See EURIP. *Heraclid*. ver. 190. THUCYD. iii. p. 200. POLYB. iii. 31, and SCHLEUSNER on *δικαιόω*. Hence *δικαιουσθαι* is taken in a *forensic* sense, and signifies to be *found* or *declared righteous, innocent, &c.* #**Mt 12:37**: *By thy words shalt thou be JUSTIFIED*-thou shalt be *declared* to be righteous. #**Ro 3:4**: *That thou mightest be JUSTIFIED in thy saying*-that thou mightest be *proved* to be *true* in what thou hast said.

6. It signifies to *set free*, to *escape from*. #**Ac 13:39**: *And by him all that believe are JUSTIFIED from all things, from which ye could not be JUSTIFIED by the law*-by faith in Christ a man *escapes*

those evils which, otherwise, the law of Moses would *inflict* upon him. **#Ro 6:7:** *For he that is dead, δεδικαιωται*, is JUSTIFIED, properly rendered by our translators, is FREED from sin.

7. It signifies also to *receive one into favour, to pardon sin*. **#Ro 8:30:** *Whom he called, them he also JUSTIFIED*-he received them into *favour* and *pardoned* their sins. **#Lu 18:14:** *This man went down to his house JUSTIFIED*-he humbled himself, repented of his iniquity, and God *forgave his sin*. **#Ro 3:20:** *By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be JUSTIFIED*-no soul can have his sins forgiven through the observance of the Mosaic law. **#Ro 4:2:** *If Abraham were JUSTIFIED* (had his *sin pardoned*) *by works*. **#1Co 6:11:** *Such were some of you, but ye are JUSTIFIED*-ye are received into the *Divine favour*, and have your *sins forgiven*. See **#Jas 2:21-25**; **#Ro 3:24, 28**; **5:1, 9**; **#Ga 2:16, 17**; **3:11, 24**; **5:4**; **#Tit 3:7**. In all these texts the word *justify* is taken in the sense of *remission of sins* through faith in Christ Jesus; and does not mean *making* the person *just* or *righteous*, but treating him as if he were so, having already *forgiven* him his sins.

**The just shall live by faith.]** This has been understood *two* ways: 1. That the just or righteous man cannot live a holy and useful life without exercising continual faith in our Lord Jesus: which is strictly true; for He only who has brought him into that state of salvation can *preserve* him in it; and he stands by faith. 2. It is contended by some able critics that the words of the original text should be pointed thus: ὁ δὲ δικαίος ἐκ πίστεως ζῆσεται. *The just by faith, shall live*; that is, he alone that is justified by faith shall be *saved*: which is also true; as it is impossible to get salvation in any other way. This last meaning is probably the true one, as the original text in **#Hab 2:4**, speaks of those who *believed* the declarations of God when the Chaldeans besieged Jerusalem, and, having acted conformably to them, escaped with their *lives*.

Verse 18. **For the wrath of God is revealed]** The apostle has now finished his *preface*, and comes to the grand *subject* of the epistle; namely, to show the *absolute need* of the Gospel of Christ, because of the *universal corruption* of mankind; which was so great as to incense the justice of God, and call aloud for the *punishment* of the world. 1. He shows that all the heathen nations were utterly corrupt, and deserved this threatened punishment. And this is the subject of the first chapter, from verse 18 to the end. **{#Ro 1:18-32}** 2. He shows that the *Jews*, notwithstanding the greatness of their privileges, were no better than the *Gentiles*; and therefore the wrath of God was revealed against *them* also. This subject he treats in **#Ro 2:1-29** and **#Ro 3:1-19**. 3. He returns, as it were, on both, **#Ro 3:20-31**, and proves that, as the Jews and Gentiles were equally corrupt, they could not be saved by the deeds of any law; that they stood equally in *need* of that salvation which God had provided; that both were equally entitled to that salvation, for God was the God of the *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*.

By *οργή Θεου*, *the wrath of God*, we are not to understand any *uneasy passion* in the Divine Being; but the *displeasure* of his righteousness, which is expressed by the punishments inflicted on the *ungodly*, those who retain not God in their knowledge; and the *unrighteous*, those whose lives are profligate.

As, in the Gospel, the *righteousness* of God is *revealed* for the *salvation of the ungodly*, so is the *wrath* of God *revealed* against the *workers of iniquity*. Those who refuse to be saved in the way revealed by his *mercy* must be consumed in the way revealed by his *justice*.

**Ungodliness]** *ασεβειαν*,, from *α*, *negative*, and *σεβω* or *σεβομαι*, *I worship*, probably intended here to express *atheism*, *polytheism*, and *idolatry* of every kind.

**Unrighteousness]** *αδικιαν* from *α*, *negative*, and *δικη*, *justice*; every thing contrary to strict morality; all viciousness and profligacy of conduct.

**Who hold the truth in unrighteousness]** In what sense could it be said that the heathen *held the truth* in unrighteousness, when they really had not that truth? Some think this refers to the conduct of their best philosophers, such as *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Seneca*, &c., who knew much more of the Divine nature than they thought safe or prudent to discover; and who acted in many things contrary to the light which they enjoyed. Others think this to be spoken of the *Gentiles* in general, who either *did know*, or *might* have known, much of God from the works of creation, as the apostle intimates in the following verses. But *Rosenmuller* and some others contend that the word *κατεχειν* here does not signify to *hold*, but to *hinder*; and that the place should be translated, *who through maliciousness hinder the truth*; i.e. prevent it from taking hold of their hearts, and from governing their conduct. This is certainly a very usual acceptance of the verb *κατεχειν*, which *Hesychius* interprets *κρατειν*, *κωλυειν*, *συνεχειν*, *to retain*, *hinder*, &c.; these men hindering, by their vicious conduct, the *truth* of God from being propagated in the earth.

Verse 19. **That which may be known of God]** Dr. Taylor paraphrases this and the following verse thus: "Although the Gentiles had no written revelation, yet what may be known of God is every where manifest among them, God having made a clear discovery of himself to them. For his being and perfections, invisible to our bodily eyes, have been, ever since the creation of the world, evidently to be seen, if attentively considered, in the visible beauty, order, and operations observable in the constitution and parts of the universe; especially his eternal power and universal dominion and providence: so that they cannot plead *ignorance* in excuse of their idolatry and wickedness."

Verse 20. **The invisible things of him]** His invisible perfections are manifested by his visible works, and may be apprehended by what he has made; their *immensity* showing his *omnipotence*, their vast *variety* and *contrivance*, his *omniscience*; and their *adaptation* to the most *beneficent purposes*, his infinite *goodness* and *philanthropy*.

**His eternal power]** *αιδιος αυτου δυναμις*, That all-powerful energy that *ever was*, and *ever will exist*; so that, ever since there was a creation to be surveyed, there have been intelligent beings to make that survey.

**And Godhead]** *θειοτης*, His *acting as God* in the government and support of the universe. His *works* prove his *being*; the *government* and *support* of these works prove it equally. *Creation* and *providence* form a *twofold* demonstration of God, 1st. in the *perfections* of his nature; and, 2dly. in the *exercise* of those perfections.

Verse 21. **Because that when they knew God]** When they thus acquired a general knowledge of the unity and perfections of the Divine nature, *they glorified him not as God*-they did not *proclaim* him to the people, but shut up his *glory* (as Bishop Warburton expresses it) in their *mysteries*, and gave the people, in exchange for an *incorruptible God*, *an image made like to corruptible man*.

Wherefore God, in punishment for their sins, thus *turning his truth into a lie*, suffered even their *mysteries*, which they had erected for a school of virtue, to degenerate into an odious sink of vice and immorality; giving them up unto all uncleanness and vile affections.

**They glorified him not]** They did not give him that *worship* which his perfections required.

**Neither were thankful]** They manifested no *gratitude* for the blessings they received from his providence, but *became vain in their imaginations*, *διαλογισμοις*, *in their reasonings*. This certainly refers to the foolish manner in which even the wisest of their philosophers discoursed about the Divine nature, not excepting *Socrates*, *Plato*, or *Seneca*. Who can read their works without being struck with the vanity of their reasonings, as well as with the stupidity of their nonsense, when speaking about God? I might crowd my page with proofs of this; but it is not necessary to those who are acquainted with their writings, and to others it would not be useful. In short, their foolish, darkened minds sought God no where but in the place in which he is never to be found; viz. the vile, corrupted, and corrupting passions of their own hearts. As they did not discover him *there*, they scarcely sought him any where else.

Verse 22. **Professing themselves to be wise]** This is most strikingly true of all the ancient philosophers, whether Greeks or Romans, as their works, which remain, sufficiently testify. The word *φασκοντες* signifies not merely the *professing* but the *assumption* of the philosophic character. In this sense the word *φασκειν* is used by the best Greek writers. See *Kypke*. A dispassionate examination of the doctrine and lives of the most famed philosophers of antiquity, of every nation, will show that they were darkened in their mind and irregular in their conduct. It was from the Christian religion alone that true philosophy and genuine philosophers sprang.

Verse 23. **They changed the glory, &c.]** The finest representation of their deities was in the *human* figure; and on such representative figures the sculptors spent all their skill; hence the *HERCULES* of *Farnese*, the *VENUS* of *Medicis*, and the *APOLLO* of *Belvidere*. And when they had formed their gods according to the *human shape*, they endowed them with *human passions*; and as they clothed them with attributes of *extraordinary strength, beauty, wisdom, &c.*, not having the true principles of morality, they represented them as slaves to the most disorderly and disgraceful passions; excelling in irregularities the most profligate of men, as possessing unlimited powers of sensual gratification.

**And to birds]** As the *eagle* of Jupiter among the Romans, and the *ibis* and *hawk* among the Egyptians; which were all sacred animals.

**Four-footed beasts]** As the *apis* or *white ox* among the Egyptians; from which the idolatrous Israelites took their *golden calf*. The *goat*, the *monkey*, and the *dog*, were also sacred animals among the same people.

**Creeping things.]** Such as the *crocodile* and *scarabeus*, or *beetle*, among the Egyptians.



Verse 24. **God-gave them up, &c.]** They had filled up the measure of their iniquities, and God, by permitting them to plunge into all manner of irregularities, thus, by one species of sin, inflicted punishment on another.

**Dishonour their own bodies]** Probably alluding here to what is more openly expressed, **#Ro 1:26, 27.**

**Between themselves]** *ἐν αὐτοῖς*, *Of themselves, of their own free accord; none inciting, none impelling.*

Verse 25. **Changed the truth of God into a lie]** In the place of the *true worship* of God, they established *idolatry*. In various places of Scripture *idols* are termed *lies*. **#Isa 44:20; #Jer 10:14; 13:25.** The true God *was* known among the primitive inhabitants of the earth, those who first became *idolaters* literally changed the truth of God into a lie: they *did know* the true God, but they put *idols* in his place.

Verse 26. **For this cause God gave them up, &c.]** Their system of idolatry necessarily produced all kinds of *impurity*. How could it be otherwise, when the highest objects of their worship were adulterers, fornicators, and prostitutes of the most infamous kind, such as *Jupiter, Apollo, Mars, Venus, &c.*? Of the abominable evils with which the apostle charges the Gentiles in this and the following verse I could produce a multitude of proofs from their own writings; but it is needless to make the subject *plainer* than the apostle has left it.

Verse 27. *Receiving in themselves that recompense, &c.]* Both the women and men, by their unnatural prostitutions, enervated their bodies, so that *barrenness* prevailed, and those disorders which are necessarily attendant on *prostitution* and *sodomitical* practices.

Verse 28. **They did not like to retain God]** It would, perhaps, be more literal to translate *οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν*, THEY DID NOT SEARCH *to retain God in their knowledge*. They did not *examine* the evidences before them (**#Ro 1:19, 20**) of his being and attributes; therefore *God gave them over to a REPROBATE mind*, *εἰς ἀδοκίμον νοῦν*, to an UNSEARCHING or *undiscerning* mind; for it is the same word in both places. They did not *reflect* on the proofs they had of the Divine nature, and God abandoned them to the operations of a mind incapable of *reflection*. How men of such powers and learning, as many of the Greek and Roman philosophers and poets really were, could reason so inconsecutively concerning things moral and Divine is truly astonishing. But here we see the hand of a just and avenging God; they abused their powers, and God deprived them of the *right use* of these powers.

Verse 29. **Being filled with all unrighteousness]** *ἀδικία*, every vice contrary to *justice* and *righteousness*.

**Fornication]** *πορνεία*, all commerce between the sexes out of the bounds of lawful marriage. Some of the best MSS. omit this reading; and others have *ακαθαρσία*, uncleanness.

**Wickedness]** πονηρία, *malignity*, that which is oppressive to its possessor and to its object; from πονος, *labour, toil, &c.*

**Covetousness]** πλεονεξία, from πλεον, *more*, and εξω, *I will have*; the intense love or lust of gain; the *determination* to be rich; the principle of a *dissatisfied* and *discontented* soul.

**Maliciousness]** κακία, *malice, ill-will*; what is radically and essentially *vicious*.

**Full of envy]** φθονου, from φθινω, *to wither, decay, consume, pine away, &c.*; "pain felt and malignity conceived at the sight of excellence or happiness in another." A fine personification of this vice is found in OVID METAM. lib. ii. ver. 768-781, which I shall here insert, with Mr. Addison's elegant and nervous translation.

—————*Videt intus edentem*  
Vipereas carnes, vitiorum alimenta suorum  
Invidiam: visaque oculos avertit. At illa  
Surgit humo pigra: semesarumque relinquit  
Corpora serpentum, passuque incedit inertī.  
Utque deam vidit formaque armisque decoram,  
Ingemuit: vultumque ima ad suspiria duxit.  
Pallor in ORE sedet: macies in CORPORE toto:  
Nusquam recta acies: vivent rubigine dentes:  
Pectora felle virent: lingua est suffusa veneno.  
Risus abest, nisi quem visi movere dolores:  
Nec fruitur somno, vigilacibus excita curis:  
Sed videt ingratos, intabescitque videndo  
Successus hominum; carpitque et carpitur una;  
Suppliciumque suum est.

———*A poisonous morsel* in her teeth she chewed,  
And gorged the flesh of *vipers* for her food.  
Minerva loathing, turned away her eye.  
The hideous monster, rising heavily,  
Came stalking forward with a sullen pace,  
And left her mangled offals on the place.  
Soon as she saw the goddess gay and bright,  
She fetched a groan at such a cheerful sight.  
*Livid* and *meagre* were her looks, her eye  
In foul *distorted glances* turned awry;  
A hoard of *gall* her *inward parts* possessed,  
And spread a *greenness* o'er her *canker'd breast*;  
Her teeth were *brown* with *rust*, and from her tongue  
In dangling drops the *stringy poison* hung.  
She never *smiles* but when the wretched weep;  
Nor lulls her *malice* with a *moment's sleep*:



*Restless in spite while watchful to destroy,  
She pines and sickens at another's joy;  
Foe to herself, distressing and distressed,  
She bears her own tormentor in her breast.*

**Murder]** φονου, *taking away the life of another by any means; mortal hatred; for he that hates his brother in his heart is a murderer.*

**Debate]** εριδος, *contention, discord, &c. Of this vile passion the Greeks made a goddess.*

**Deceit]** δολου, *lying, falsity, prevarication, imposition, &c.; from δελω, to take with a bait.*

**Malignity]** κακοθηειας, from κακος, *evil*, and ηθος, *a custom*; bad customs, founded in *corrupt sentiment*, producing *evil habits*, supported by *general usage*. It is generally interpreted, a *malignity of mind*, which leads its possessor to put the worst construction on every action; ascribing to the *best deeds* the *worst motives*.

**Whisperers]** ψιθυριστος, *secret detractors; those who, under pretended secrecy, carry about accusations against their neighbours, whether true or false; blasting their reputation by clandestine tittle-tattle. This word should be joined to the succeeding verse.*

The *whispering* is well expressed by the Greek word ψιθυριστας, psithuristas.

Verse 30. **Backbiters]** καταλαλους, from κατα, *against*, and λαλεω, *I speak*; those who speak against others; false accusers, *slanderers*.

**Haters of God]** θεοστυγεις, *atheists, contemners of sacred things, maligners of providence, scorners, &c.* All profligate deists are of this class; and it seems to be the finishing part of a diabolic character.

**Despiteful]** υβριστας, from υβριζω, *to treat with injurious insolence*; stormy, boisterous; abusing both the characters and persons of those over whom they can have any power.

**Proud]** υπερηφανους, from υπερ, *above or over*, and φαινω, *I show or shine*. They who are continually exalting themselves and depressing others; magnifying themselves at the expense of their neighbours; and wishing all men to receive their *sayings* as oracles.

**Boasters]** αλαζονας, from λαζομαι, *to assume*; self-assuming, vain-glorious, and arrogant men.

**Inventors of evil things]** εφευρετας κακων. Those who have *invented destructive customs, rites, fashions, &c.*; such as the different religious *ceremonies* among the *Greeks* and *Romans*-the *orgies of Bacchus*, the *mysteries of Ceres*, the *lupercalia*, feasts of the *Bona Dea*, &c., &c. Multitudes of which evil things, destructive and abominable ceremonies, are to be found in every part of the heathen worship.

**Disobedient to parents]** Though filial affection was certainly more recommended and cultivated than many other virtues, yet there are many instances on record of the grossest violation of this great branch of the law of nature.

Verse 31. **Without understanding]** *ασυνετους*, from *α*, *negative*, and *συνετος*, *knowing*; persons incapable of comprehending what was spoken; destitute of capacity for spiritual things.

**Covenant-breakers]** *ασυνθετους*, from *α*, *negative*, and *συντιθημι*, *to make an agreement*; persons who could be bound by no *oath*, because, properly speaking, they had *no God* to witness or avenge their misconduct. As every covenant, or agreement, is made as in the presence of God, so he that opposes the being and doctrine of God is incapable of being bound by any covenant; he can give no pledge for his conduct.

**Without natural affection]** *αστοργους*; without that attachment which nature teaches the young of all animals to have to their mothers, and the mothers to have for their young. The heathens, in general, have made no scruple to *expose* the children they did not think proper to bring up, and to despatch their parents when they were grown old or past labour.

**Implacable]** *ασπονδους*, from *α*, *negative*; and *σπονδη*, A LIBATION. It was customary among all nations to pour out *wine* as a libation to their gods, when making a treaty. This was done to appease the angry gods, and *reconcile* them to the contracting parties. The word here shows a *deadly enmity*; the highest pitch of an unforgiving spirit; in a word, persons who would not make *reconciliation* either to God or *man*.

**Unmerciful]** *ανελεημονας*; those who were incapable, through the deep-rooted wickedness of their own nature, of showing mercy to an *enemy* when brought under their power, or doing any thing for the *necessitous*, from the principle of *benevolence* or *commiseration*.

Verse 32. **Who, knowing the judgment of God]** *δικαιωμα*, the *grand rule of right* which God has revealed to every man, the knowledge of which he has, less or more, given to every nation of the world, relative to honouring parents, taking care of their own offspring, keeping their engagements, &c., &c. In the worst states of heathenism this great principle has been acknowledged; but, through the prevalence of corruption in the heart, this law, though acknowledged, was not obeyed; and the corruption increased so that those were highest in repute who had cast off all restraints of this kind; so that they even delighted in them; *συνευδοκουσι*, highly applauded, and gladly associated with those transgressors: which argues the very highest pitch of moral depravity.

1. THE preceding chapter gives us one of the finest views of the Gospel of Christ, to be met with any where. It is God's *method of saving a lost world*, in a way which that world could never have imagined: there is nothing *human* in it; it is all truly and gloriously *Divine*; essentially necessary to the salvation of man, and fully *adequate* to the purposes of its institution. Though it is an extension of the old covenant, yet it is almost wholly dissimilar; being as different from that as the *person* is from the *picture* which represents it, and as the *substance* is from the *shadow* projected by it. It is a scheme as *worthy* of God as it is *necessary* for *man*; hence there are no excluding clauses in it-it

is for the *Jew* and for the *Greek*; for the *wise* and for the *unwise*; for all the *nations* of the universe, and for all the *individuals* of those nations. He blasphemes God who holds the contrary.

2. As God never does any thing that is not *fitting*, *suitable*, and *necessary* to be done, he has not made an *unnecessary* display of his mercy and goodness in the incarnation and death of his Son—all this was *necessary*, else it had not been done. But how does the necessity appear? In the deep-rooted and widely extended corruption and profligacy of the nations of the earth. Of these the apostle gives a most affecting and distressing picture. 1. Almost every *trace* of original righteousness had been *obliterated*. 2. The proofs of God's eternal power and providence, so manifest in the creation and preservation of the universe, were wholly disregarded. 3. A vain philosophy, without right, *principle*, or *end*, was substituted for those Divine truths which had been discovered originally to man. 4. Their hearts were contaminated with every vice which could blind the understanding, pervert the judgment, corrupt the will, and debase the affections and passions. 5. This was proved in the most unequivocal manner, by a profligacy of conduct which had debased them far, far below the beasts that perish; and the apostle here gives a list of their crimes, every article of which can be incontrovertibly proved from their own history and their own writers: crimes which, even bad as the world is now, would shock common decency to describe. See the whole of the *second*, *third*, *sixth*, and *ninth* Satires of *Juvenal*.

3. So completely lost were the heathens to a knowledge of the influence of God on the souls and the necessity of that influence, that they asserted, in the most positive manner, that man was the author of his own virtue and wisdom. Cicero, *Nat. Deor.*, lib. iii. c. 36, declares it a general opinion that, although mankind received from the gods the outward conveniencies of life—*virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit*—"virtue none ever thought they received from the Deity." And again:—"This is the persuasion of all, that fortune is to be had from the gods; wisdom from ourselves." And again:—"Whoever thanked the gods for his being a good man? Men pray to Jupiter, not that he would make them *just*, *temperate*, and *wise*; but rich and prosperous."

JUVENAL, on this point, speaks thus:—

*Monstro, quod ipse tibi possis dare: Semita certe  
Tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vitæ.  
Sat. x. v. 363.*

The path to peace is *virtue*; which, I show,  
*Thyself* may fully on *thyself* bestow.

In the same strain, HORACE, EPIST. lib. i. E. xviii. v. penult.

*Hæc satis est orare Jovem, qui donat et aufert:  
Det vitam det opes: æquum mi animum ipse parabo.*

To Jove for life and wealth I pray,  
These Jove may give or take away;  
But, for a *firm and tranquil mind*,  
That *blessing for myself I find*.

Thus, *they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; and professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*. See Madan's *Juvenal*, vol. ii. p. 53.

4. By all this we see what the world was, and what it would have continued to be had not God sent a *Divine* revelation of his will, and established a public ministry to proclaim and enforce it. Were man left to the power and influence of his fallen nature he would be, in all places of his dispersion on the earth, what the apostle describes in the 29th, 30th, and 31st verses of this chapter. {**#Ro 1:29-31**}

Reader, magnify God, who has called thee from such deep darkness, to the marvellous light of the glorious Gospel of his Son; and walk as a child of the light and of the day, in whom there shall be no cause of stumbling.

## ROMANS

### CHAPTER II.

*The apostle shows that the Jew, who condemns the Gentiles, and considers them utterly unworthy of the blessings of the Gospel, is inexcusable, because he is guilty of the same crimes; and therefore shall not escape the righteous judgment of God, 1-3. It is an awful thing to despise the goodness and long-suffering of God, which lead to repentance, 4, 5. God, the impartial judge, will render to every man according to his works, 6-11. The Jews and the Gentiles will be judged according to their respective advantages and disadvantages, 12, 13. In some cases, the Gentiles, who had no law, have shown a better disposition than the Jews, 14-16. The Jews, by their unfaithfulness, have been a stumbling-block to the Gentiles, 17-24. Jewish rites and ceremonies of no advantage, unless productive of change of heart and conduct, 25. The Gentiles, who attend to the small light which they have received from God, are in a better state than the unfaithful Jews, with all their superior privileges, 26, 27. What constitutes a real Jew in the sight of God, 28, 29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. II.

Dr. Taylor makes the following sensible observations at the commencement of this chapter.

"The representation of the moral state of the heathen world, in the foregoing chapter, is a demonstration of the *necessity of the Gospel* for the reformation and salvation of man. And how rich is the favour wherewith God has visited the world! To have destroyed a race of apostate rebels, who had abused their understandings and every gift of a bountiful Creator, would have been *justice*; to have spared them would have been *lenity* and *goodness*; but to send his only begotten Son from heaven to redeem us from all iniquity and ungodliness by his own blood; to grant us a free pardon for all our sins; to put us in a state of mercy and salvation; to take us into his kingdom and family; to give us an inheritance among his saints; to bless us with immortality and all spiritual blessings in heavenly places;-this is most wonderful and exuberant favour. Rightly is the doctrine which teaches it called the *Gospel*, or *glad tidings*. One would think it could not possibly have met with opposition from any part of mankind. But the JEW opposed it! He abhorred the *Gentile*, and contradicted the grace that honoured and saved him. The apostle pleads and defends our cause. His business is to confound the *Jew*, and to prove that *we* have as good a right as he to all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. And, by his description of the vicious state of the Gentiles, in the former chapter, he has wisely made his advantage of the prejudices of the *Jew*; for nothing could please him more than the preceding discourse, in which the Gentiles are reduced to so vile and abject a state. Thus the apostle gives him an opportunity to condemn the Gentiles; but he does this that he may the more effectually humble him in this chapter; in which he proves that the Jews, having in an aggravated manner despised the goodness and broken the law of God, were as obnoxious to his wrath as the Gentiles; and if so, how could they, with any conscience or modesty, arrogate all the Divine mercy to *themselves*, or pretend that others were unworthy of it, when *they* had done as much or more to forfeit it! Must they not exclude themselves from being the people of God under the Gospel, by the same reason that they would have the Gentiles excluded! But this was an argument highly ungrateful to the Jew; and it would be very difficult to fix any conviction upon his mind.

Therefore the apostle addresses him in a covert way:-*Thou art therefore inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest*; not giving out expressly that he meant the *Jew*, that the *Jew* might more calmly attend to his reasoning, while he was not apprehensive that *he* was the man. This point secured, the apostle, very judiciously and with great force of reasoning, turns his thoughts from his present superior advantages to the awful day of judgment, **#Ro 2:5, 6**, when God, in the most impartial equity, will render to all mankind, without exception, according to their works. Thus the apostle grounds his following argument, very methodically and solidly, in God's equal regards to all men, in all nations, who uprightly practise truth and godliness; and his disapproving, and at last condemning, all men, in any nation, however privileged, who live wickedly. This was a blow at the root, and demolished, in the most effectual manner, the *Jew's* prejudices in favour of his own nation, and the unkind thoughts he had entertained of the *Gentiles*. For, if a *Jew* could be convinced that a sober, upright heathen might be blessed with eternal salvation, he must be persuaded that it was no absurd matter that believing *Gentiles* should *now* be pardoned, and taken into the visible Church. Thus the apostle advances with great skill, insinuating himself, by degrees, into the *Jew's* conscience. It is reasoning is well adapted to encourage the *Gentile*, humbled by the dismal representation in the preceding chapter; for he would here see that he was not utterly abandoned of God, but might, upon good grounds, hope for his mercy and kindness."

Verse 1. **That judgest]** *ὁ κρινων*, the *judger*; thou *assumest* the character of a judge, and in that character condemnest others who are less guilty than thyself.

Verse 2. **We are sure that the judgment of God, &c.]** God is impartial, and will punish sin wheresoever he finds it. *Transgression* in a *Jew* is not less criminal than *iniquity* in a *Gentile*.

Verse 4. **Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness]** Wilt thou render of none effect that marked benevolence of God towards thee which has given so many superior advantages, and that *forbearance* which has tolerated thy many miscarriages, and that *long-suffering* which, after repeated provocations, still continues to bear with thee?

**Not knowing]** *αγνοων*, not *acknowledging* that this goodness of God, which has so long manifested itself in *forbearance* and *long-suffering*, *leadeth thee to repentance*-was designed to accomplish this blessed end; which thy want of *consideration* and *acknowledgment* has rendered, hitherto, ineffectual. This was a maxim among the *Jews* themselves; for, in *Synopsis Sohar*, it is said:-*The holy blessed God delays his anger against the wicked, to the end that they may repent and be converted.*

Verse 5. **But after thy hardness]** Occasioned by thy long course of iniquity. *And impenitent heart*-produced by thy hardness, through which thou art callous to the calls and expostulations of conscience. *Treasurest up*-continuest to *increase thy debt* to the Divine justice, which will infallibly inflict *wrath*-punishment in *the day of wrath*-the judgment day, in which he will render to every man according to his works. The word *treasure* the Hebrew uses to express any kind of *store* or *collection*:-*Treasure* or plenty of rain. **#De 28:12:** *The Lord shall open unto thee his good TREASURE, to give the RAIN unto thy land.* *Treasure of punishment.* **#De 32:34, 35:** *Is not this sealed up among my TREASURES? To me belongeth VENGEANCE and RECOMPENSE.* *Treasures of mines*, i.e. abundance of minerals. **#De 33:19:** *They shall suck of the ABUNDANCE of the seas, and of*

TREASURES *hid in the sand*. So treasures of *gold, silver, corn, wine, oil, &c.*, mean *collections* or an *abundance* of such things: the word is used by the Greek *writers* precisely in the same sense. By *wrath* we are to understand *punishment*, as in **#Ro 1:18**; and it is used so by the very best Greek writers. See *Kypke*.

The *treasure of wrath*, in this verse, is opposed to the *riches* of *goodness*, in the preceding. As surely as thou despisest, or neglectest to improve the RICHES of *God's GOODNESS*, so surely thou shalt share in the TREASURES of his WRATH. The *punishment* shall be proportioned to the *mercy* thou hast abused.

Verse 6. **Who will render]** Who, in the day of judgment, will reward and punish every man according as his life and conversation have been.

Verse 7. **To them, &c.]** In this manner will God, in the great day, dispense punishments and rewards: 1. He will give eternal life to them who, in all the *trials* and *difficulties* of the present state, have *persevered* in *well doing*-seeking for and expecting *glory, honour, and immortality*.

Verse 8. **But unto them, &c.]** 2. He will manifest his *indignation*, and inflict *wrath*-punishment, on all who are *contentious*-who obstinately dispute against the truth, and *obey unrighteousness*-who act under the influence of the principle of sin, and not under the influence of the Spirit of God.

Verse 9. **Tribulation and anguish]** Misery of all descriptions, without the possibility of escape, will this righteous Judge inflict upon every impenitent sinner. The *Jew first*, as possessing greater privileges, and having abused greater mercies; and also on the *Gentile*, who, though he had not the same advantages, had what God saw was sufficient for his state; and, having sinned against them, shall have punishment proportioned to his demerit.

Verse 10. **But glory, honour, and peace]** While the finally impenitent Jew and Gentile shall experience the fullest effects of the righteous indignation of the supreme Judge, even man that *worketh good*-that lives in a conscientious obedience to the *known will of God*, whether he be *Jew* or *Gentile*, shall have *glory, honour, and peace*; i.e. eternal blessedness.

Verse 11. **For there is no respect of persons with God.]** The righteous Judge will not act according to any principle of *partiality*; the *character* and *conduct*, alone of the persons shall weigh with him. He will take no wicked man to glory, let his nation or advantages be what they may; and he will send no righteous man to perdition, though brought up in the very bosom of *Gentilism*. And as he will judge in that day according to *character* and *conduct*, so his judgment will proceed on the ground of the *graces, privileges, and blessings* which they had received, improved or abused. And as there is no respect of persons with God in judgment, so there can be none in the *previous* administration of his *saving* blessings. He that will be condemned for his unrighteousness, will be condemned on the ground that he had sufficient grace afforded him for the salvation of his soul; and his condemnation will rest on the simple principle, that he *abused the grace* which was sufficient to save him, by acting in opposition to its dictates and influence. No man, in that great day, shall be brought to heaven through any *partiality* of the Judge; and no man sent to hell because God did not afford him sufficient grace, or because he had made a *decree* which rendered even his use of it



*ineffectual* to his salvation. In reference to the great design of God, in the salvation of man, it shall be said, -in time, at the day of judgment, and throughout eternity,—THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS WITH GOD.

Verse 12. **For as many as have sinned without law, &c.]** They, viz. the *Gentiles*, who shall be found to have transgressed against the mere *light of nature*, or rather, *that true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, #Joh 1:9, shall not come under the same rule with those, the *Jews*, who have in *addition* to this enjoyed an extraordinary *revelation*; but they shall be dealt with according to the inferior dispensation, under which they lived: while those, the *Jews*, who have *sinned against the law*-the positive Divine revelation granted to them, *shall be judged by that law*, and punished proportionably to the abuse of such an extraordinary advantage.

Verse 13. **For not the hearers of the law, &c.]** It does not follow, because one people are favoured with a Divine revelation, that therefore *they* shall be *saved*; while the others who have not had that revelation, shall finally perish: this is not God's procedure; where he has given a *law-a Divine revelation*, he requires *obedience* to that law; and only those who have been *doers of that law*-who have lived according to the light and privileges granted in that revelation, *shall be justified*-shall be finally acknowledged to be such as are fit for the kingdom of God.

Verse 14. **For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, &c.]** Nor does it follow that the *Gentiles* who have not had a Divine revelation, shall either perish, because they had it not; or their unrighteous conduct pass *unpunished*, because not having this revelation might be considered as an excuse for their sins.

**Do by nature the things contained in the law]** Do, without this Divine revelation, through that light which God imparts to every man, *the things contained in the law*-act according to justice, mercy, temperance and truth, the practice of which the revealed law so powerfully enjoins; *these are a law unto themselves*-they are not accountable to any other law, and are not to be judged by any dispensation different from that under which they live.

*Rabbi Tanchum* brings in the Supreme Being as saying: *When I decreed any thing against the Gentiles, to whom I have not given laws and statutes*, and they know what I have decreed; immediately they repent; but the Israelites do not so. *Tanchum*, fol. 43. 2.

Verse 16. **In the day when God shall judge]** And all this shall be farther exemplified and proved in the day when God shall judge the *secrets of men by Jesus Christ*; which judgment shall be according to *my Gospel*-according to what I am now laying down before you, relative to the *impartiality of God*, and his *righteous* procedure in judging men, not according to their opinions or prejudices, not according to revelations which they never possessed, but according to the various advantages or disadvantages of their political, religious, or domestic situation in life.

Much stress has been laid on the word, φύσει, *by nature*, in #Ro 2:14, as if the apostle designed to intimate that *nature*, independently of the influence of Divine grace, possessed such principles as were sufficient to guide a man to glory. But certainly the term cannot be so understood here. I rather think that the sense given to it in *Suicer's Thesaurus*, vol ii. col. 1475, *reipsa, revera*, CERTAINLY,

TRULY, is its sense here: *for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, φυσει ποιη, TRULY, or in effect, DO the things contained in the law, &c.* This seems to be its sense in **#Ga 4:8**: *When ye knew not God, ye did service to them which φυσει, CERTAINLY are no gods; i.e. are false gods.* Suicer quotes Cyril of Alexandria, (sub Anathematismo iii. in Actis Ephesinis, p. 212,) speaking of the union of the two natures in Christ; he calls this union *φυσικην, natural*; that is, says he, *αληθη, true, or real.* He adds, that the word should be thus understood in **#Eph 2:3**: *We were by nature, φυσει, children of wrath; and says, φυσει αντι του αληθως· φυσει is here used for αληθως, TRULY; We were TRULY, INCONTESTABLY, the children of wrath, even as others.* That is, like the rest of mankind, we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and, consequently are exposed to *punishment*. Some think that this text refers to the *natural corruption* of man; but, although it is true that man comes into the world corrupt, and that all men, since the *fall*, are very far gone from original righteousness, yet it is not *clear* that the text in **#Eph 2:3**, speaks of any other thing than the *effects* of this degeneracy.

I prefer this sense, in the passage in question, to that which says the *light of nature, or natural instinct*, is here meant; for I know of no light in nature that is not kindled there by the *grace of God*. But I have no objection to this sense: "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do, by the influence of God upon their hearts, the things contained in the law, they are a law unto themselves; that light and influence serving instead of a Divine revelation." That the Gentiles did *really* do the things contained in the law, in reference to what is termed *natural justice*, and made the wisest distinctions relative to the great principles of the doctrine of *civil RIGHTS and WRONGS*, every man conversant with their writings will admit. And in reference to this the word *φυσει* may be legitimately understood thus—they *incontestably* did the things contained in the law, &c.

The passage in **#Ro 2:15**, *Their thoughts-accusing or excusing one another*, certainly does not refer to any expostulations or operations of *conscience*; for this is referred to in the preceding clause. The words *accusing, κατηγορουτων, and excusing, απολογουμενων, answering or defending one another, μεταξυ αλληλων, among themselves*, are all forensic or *law* terms, and refer to the mode of conducting *suits of law* in courts of justice, where one is *plaintiff*, who produces his *accusation*; another is *defendant*, who *rebut*s the *charge* and defends himself; and then the business is argued before the judges. This process shows that they have a law of *their own*, and that to this law it belongs to adjust differences—to right those who have suffered wrong, and to punish the guilty.

As to the phrase *written in their hearts*, it is here opposed to the Jewish laws, which were *written on tables of stone*. The *Jews* drew the maxims by which their conduct was regulated from a *Divine revelation*: the *GENTILES* theirs from what God, in the course of his providence and gracious influence, had shown them to be right, useful, and necessary. And with them this law was *well known and affectionately regarded*; for this is one meaning of the phrase, *written in the heart*. It was from this true light, enlightening the Gentiles, that they had so many wise and wholesome laws; laws which had been among them from time immemorial, and of which they did not know the origin. Thus Sophocles, in the noble speech which he puts in the mouth of Antigone:-

Ου γαρ τι νυν γε κυχθες, αλλ' ποτε  
Ζη ταυτα, κουδεις οιδεν εξ οτου φανη·

"Not now, nor yesterday, but evermore  
These laws have lived: nor know we whence they came."  
Antig. ver. 463-4.

These are the laws, *νομινα*, which the Spirit of God wrote originally on their hearts; and which, in different forms, they had committed to writing.

Verse 17. **Behold, thou art called a Jew]** What the apostle had said in the preceding verses being sufficient to enforce conviction on the conscience of the Jew, he now throws off the cover, and openly argues with him in the most plain and nervous manner; asserting that his superior knowledge, privileges, and profession, served only to aggravate his condemnation. And that, in fact, he who, under all his greater advantages, transgressed the law of God, stood condemned by the honest *Gentile*, who, to the best of his knowledge obeyed it. Dr. Taylor.

**And retest in the law]** Thou trustest in it for thy endless salvation. The word *επαναπαυη*, implies the strongest confidence of safety and security. Thou *reposest thy whole trust and confidence* in this law.

**And makest thy boast of God]** That thou knowest his *nature* and *attributes*, which are not known to the Gentiles. The word, *καυχασαι*, implies the idea of *exulting* in any thing, as being a *proper object of hope and dependence*: and, when referred to GOD, it points out that HE is the sure cause of *hope, dependence, joy, and happiness*; and that it is the highest *honour* to be called to know his name, and be employed in his service. As if the apostle had said: You rejoice in God as the object of your hope and dependence; you praise and magnify him; you account it your greatest *honour* that HE is your God, and that you worship him.

Verse 18. **Knowest his will]** Hast been favoured with a revelation of his own will, immediately from himself.

**The things that are more excellent]** *τα διοφεροντα*, *The things that differ*-that revelation which God has given of himself makes the nicest *distinctions* between *right* and *wrong*; between *vice* and *virtue*; showing how you should walk so as to please God, and, consequently, acquire the *most excellent* portion that human spirits can have on this side heaven: for all these *blessings* ye acknowledge to receive from your *law*, being instructed, *κατηχομενος*, being *catechized*, from your infancy, in the knowledge of Divine things.

Verse 19. **And art confident, &c.]** In consequence of all these religious advantages, ye believe that ye are able to teach others, and to be *guides* and *lights* to the *bewildered, darkened Gentiles*, who may become proselytes to your religion.

Verse 20. **An instructor of the foolish, &c.]** Ye believe the Gentiles to be *babes* and *fools* when compared with yourselves; that ye alone possess the only *true knowledge*; that ye are the only *favourites* of Heaven; and that all nations must look up to you as possessing the only *form of knowledge*, *μορφωσιν της γνωσεως*, the grand *scheme* and *draught* of all true *science*, of every thing

that is worthy to be learned: the system of eternal *truth*, derived *from the law*. If, therefore, ye act not as becomes those who have such eminent advantages, it must be to your endless disgrace and infamy.

Verse 21. **Thou therefore]** Dr. Taylor has paraphrased this and the three following verses thus: "What signify your pretensions to knowledge, and the office of teaching others, if you have no regard to your own doctrine? What are you the better for preaching against *theft*, if you are a *thief* yourself? Or for declaring *adultery* unlawful, if you live in the practice of it? Or for representing *idolatry* abominable, if you are guilty of *sacrilege*? What honours or singular favours do you deserve, if, while you glory in the law and your religious privileges, you dishonour God, and discredit his religion, by transgressing his law, and living in open contradiction to your profession? And this is more than supposition; notorious instances might be produced of the forementioned crimes, whereby the Jews of the present age have brought a reproach upon religion among the *Gentiles*; as well as those Jews of former times, of whom the Prophet Ezekiel speaks, **#Eze 36:23**: *And I will sanctify my great name, which was PROFANED among the HEATHEN, which ye have PROFANED in the midst of them.*"

That the Jewish *priesthood* was exceedingly corrupt in the time of the apostle, and that they were so long before, is fully evident from the sacred writings and from Josephus. The high-priesthood was a matter of *commerce*, and was *bought* and *sold* like other commodities. Of this Josephus gives many instances. The *rapine* of Eli's sons descended to several generations. Dr. Whitby well observes that of all these things mentioned by the apostle the Jewish doctors were notoriously guilty; and of most of them they were accused by our Lord. 1. *They said and did not; and laid heavy burdens upon others, which they would not touch with their own fingers*, **#Mt 23:3, 4**. 2. They made the house of God a den of *thieves*, **#Mt 21:13**; **#Joh 2:16**. 3. They were guilty of *adultery* by unjust *divorces*, **#Mt 19:9**. 4. Their *polygamy* was scandalous: even their rabbins, when they came to any place, would exclaim, *Who will be my wife for a day?* As to *idolatry*, they were perfectly saved from it ever since the Babylonish captivity but to this succeeded *sacrilege*, as is most evident in the profanation of the temple, by their commerce transacted even within its courts; and their teaching the people that even their aged parents might be left to starve, provided the children made a *present to the temple* of that which should have gone for their support. According to Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* l. vi. c. 26, *They were guilty of theft, treachery, adultery, sacrilege, rapine, and murder.* And he adds, that *new ways of wickedness were invented by them; and that of all their abominations the temple was the receptacle.* In his *Antiquities* of the Jews, lib. xx. c. 8, he says: *The servants of the high priests took away, by violence, the tithes of the priests, so that many of them perished for want of food.* Even their own writers acknowledge that there were great irregularities and abominations among the rabbins.

So *Bereshith rabba*, sect. 55, fol. 54: "Rabbi Abun proposed a parable concerning a master who taught his disciples not to pervert justice, and yet did it himself; not to show respect of persons, and yet did it himself; not to receive bribes, and yet received them himself; not to take usury, and yet took it himself. The disciple replied:-Rabbi, thou teachest me not to take usury, and yet thou takest it thyself! Can that be lawful to *thee* which is forbidden to *me*?"

Verse 24. **For the name of God is blasphemed, &c.]** In *Debarim rabba*, sect. 2, fol. 251, it is said:- "The rulers destroy the influence of their own words among the people; and this is done when a rabbin, sitting and teaching in the academy, says, Do not take usury, and himself takes it; do not commit rapine, and himself commits it; do not steal, and himself steals." That they were exceedingly lax in their morals, the following fact proves:- "Rabbi Ilai said, If a man see that his evil propensities are likely to prevail against him, let him go to some place where he is not known, and let him put on black clothes, and cover his head with a black veil; and then let him *do whatsoever he pleases*, lest the name of God should be *publicly profaned*." *Mæd katon*, fol. 17. 1. In *Sohar Levit.* fol. 31, col. 122, it is said:- "On *three* accounts the Jews are obliged to remain in captivity-1. Because they *openly reproach* the Shechinah-2. Because they *profane themselves* before the Shechinah-3. Because they *turn away their faces* from the Shechinah."

But it would be endless to collect from their history the proofs of the charges brought here against them by the apostle. See *Whitby*, *Schoettgen*, and others.

Verse 25. **For circumcision verily profiteth]** It is a blessing to belong to the Church of God and wear the sign of the covenant, provided the terms of the covenant are complied with.

**But if thou be a breaker of the law]** If thou do not observe the conditions of the covenant, the outward sign is both without meaning and without effect. This was a maxim of the rabbins themselves; for they allowed that an apostate or ungodly Israelite must go to hell, notwithstanding his *circumcision*.

Verse 26. **Therefore if the uncircumcision, &c.]** If the *Gentile* be found to act according to the *spirit* and *design* of the *law*, his acting thus uprightly, according to the light which God has afforded him, will be reckoned to him as if he were circumcised and walked agreeably to the law.

Verse 27. **And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature]** And shall not the Gentile, who is *ἐκ φύσεως*, according to the *custom of his country*-who is, *by birth*, not obliged to be circumcised.

**If it fulfil the law]** If such a person act according to the spirit and design of the law; *judge κρινεῖ* *condemn thee*, who, whilst thou dost enjoy the *letter*, the written law, and bearest in thy body the proof of the *circumcision* which it requires, *dost transgress that law?*

Verse 28. **For he is not a Jew]** A genuine *member of the Church* of God, who has only an *outward* profession.

**Neither is that circumcision]** Circumcision is a rite which represents a *spiritual* thing, viz. the change and purification of the heart, as may be seen, **#Jer 4:4, 6, 10; 9:26; #Eze 44:7, 9.**

Verse 29. **But he is a Jew]** A true member of the Church of God.

**Which is one inwardly]** Who has his heart purified, according to what God has uniformly prescribed by his prophets; see above: for *circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit*, *ἐν πνεύματι* *by the Spirit* of God, who is the author of all *spiritual affections* and *holy purposes*: or, every thing here

is to be understood *spiritually*, and not *literally*; for without holiness none can *please* God, and without holiness none can *see* him.

**Whose praise is not of men]** It has, with great probability, been conjectured that the apostle may here refer to the signification of the name *Jew*, or *Judah*, יהודה *Yehudah*, PRAISE, from ידא *Yadah*, he PRAISED. Such a one is a true Israelite, who walks in a conformity to the spirit of his religion: his *countrymen* may *praise* him because he is a steady professor of the Jewish faith; but GOD *praises* him, because he has entered into the *spirit* and *design* of the covenant made with Abraham, and has got the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul. Sentiments like these, on the same subject, may be found in the ancient Jewish writers. *Rabbi Lipman* gives the opinion of their most ancient and pure writers in these words:-"A certain Christian mocked us, saying, 'Women, who cannot be circumcised, cannot be reckoned among Jews.' Such persons are ignorant that *faith* does not consist in *circumcision*, but in the *heart*. He who has not genuine faith is not a partaker of the Jewish circumcision; but he who has genuine faith is a *Jew*, although *not circumcised*." NIZZACHON, Num. 21, p. 19. It is a curious maxim of the Talmudists, *That the Jews sit in the inmost recesses of the heart*. NIDDA, fol. 20, 2. This is exactly the sentiment of St. Paul: *Circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit*. In short, common sense, as well as their law and their prophets, taught every considerate man among them that God could be pleased with their rites and external performances *no farther* than they led to *holiness of heart* and *righteousness of life*.

1. WHAT the apostle says, in the preceding chapter, concerning the *Gentiles doing by nature the things contained in the law*, if properly considered, would lead certain persons from forming erroneous judgments concerning the Divine dispensations. We are not to suppose that God is not to be found where his *written* word does not appear; nor that the salvation of the nations yet unblessed with the light of the Gospel is impossible. God has never confined himself to any *one particular way* of communicating his salvation, any more than he has confined his saving grace to *one people*. His word is an indescribable blessing; but that word becomes effectual to salvation when accompanied by the power of the *Holy Spirit*. It was that *Spirit* which gave the *word originally*; and that same Spirit can speak *without this word*. It is through *his* influence alone that the Gentiles do the things contained in his own law; and it is not to be wondered at that the work is the same, both in the *law* and in the *heart*, when it has proceeded from the *same Spirit*.

2. God therefore will judge all nations according to the use and abuse they have made of this word, whether it was written in the *heart*, or written on tables of *stone*.

3. As he is no respecter of persons, all nations are equally dear to him; and he *has* granted and *will* grant to them such discoveries of himself as have been and will be sufficient for their salvation.

4. His WORD is an infinite blessing; and he has given it to one people that they may be the means of conveying it to another. Europe, and especially Christian Europe, has got the BIBLE; and God requires Europe to send the Bible throughout the earth. If this be not done, through their neglect, the Gentile nations will not be destroyed by a merciful God; yet the Europeans will have a most solemn and awful account to render to their Judge, that they have hidden the heavenly light under their own bushel. BRITAIN is shaking herself from the dust, and, by means of the BRITISH and FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, is sending the holy Scriptures to every kingdom, and nation, and people, and tongue. The

*Gentiles* are now learning from the *written* law more fully and savingly what the Spirit of God had before written on their *hearts*; and it seems as if the *kingdom of God* were now about to come with all-conquering *power*.



# ROMANS

## CHAPTER III.

*The apostle points out the peculiar privileges of the Jews, 1-8. But shows that they, also, as well as the Gentiles, had sinned, and forfeited all right and title to God's especial favour, 9. The corrupt state of all mankind, 10-18. All the world is guilty before God, and none can be justified by the works of the law, 19, 20. God's MERCY in providing redemption for a lost world, by Jesus Christ, 21-26. This excludes boasting on the part both of Jew and Gentile; provides salvation through faith for both; and does not set aside, but establishes the law, 27-31.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. III.

Dr. Taylor observes:—"In the preceding chapter the apostle has carried his argument to the utmost length: what remains is to keep the Jew in temper, to fix his convictions, and to draw the grand conclusion.

"He has shown that the Jews were more wicked than the Gentiles; that their possession of the law, circumcision, and outward profession of relation to God, were no ground of acceptance with him. This was in effect to say that the Jews had forfeited their right to the privileges of God's peculiar people, and that they were as unworthy to be *continued* in the Church as the Gentiles were to be taken into it; and consequently, in order to their enjoying the privileges of the Church under the Messiah, they stood in need of a fresh display of grace, which if they rejected, God would cast them out of the vineyard. The apostle was sensible that the Jew would understand what he said in this sense; and that it must be very irritating to him to hear that his law, circumcision, and all his external advantages, were utterly insufficient to procure him the favour of God. This at once stripped him of all his peculiar honours and privileges; and the apostle, who had often argued with his countrymen on these points, knew what they would be ready to say on this subject; and, therefore, introduces a *dialogue* between himself and a Jew, in which he gives him leave to answer and defend himself. In this dialogue the apostle undoubtedly refers to the *rejection of the Jews*, which he considers at large in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters. After the dialogue is finished, he resumes his argument, and proves, by their own *Scriptures*, that the Jews were guilty as well as other men; and that no part of mankind could have any right to the blessings of God's kingdom by *any works* which they had performed, but merely through the propitiatory sacrifice offered by Christ; and that this, far from destroying the law, was just the thing that the law required, and by which its claims were established.

"The sum and force of the apostle's argument is this: All sorts of men, *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*, have *sinned*; therefore, none of them can lay claim to the blessings of his kingdom on the ground of *obedience*. The *Jew*, therefore, stands as much in need of God's *grace* to give him a title to those blessings as the *Gentile*; and, consequently, the *Gentile* has as good a title as the *Jew*. And, when *all* are in the same circumstances, it is perfectly absurd for *any* to pretend to engross it to themselves, exclusively of others, who are only as bad as they.

"Thus the apostle solidly proves that we, *Gentiles*, through *faith alone*, have a good and firm title to all the blessings of the Gospel *covenant-election, adoption, pardon, privileges, ordinances*, the *Holy Spirit*, and the *hope of eternal life*."

As the nine first verses are a *dialogue* between the *apostle* and a *Jew*, I shall prefix the speakers to their respective questions and answers, to make the whole the more intelligible to the reader.

Verse 1. JEW. **What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?**] As if he had said: You lately allowed, (**#Ro 2:25**;) that *circumcision verily profited*; but if circumcision, or our being in covenant with God, raises us no higher in the Divine favour than the *Gentiles*; if the virtuous among *them* are as acceptable as any of *us*; nay, and condemn our nation too, as no longer deserving the Divine regards; pray tell me, wherein lies the superior honour of the Jew; and what benefit can arise to him from his *circumcision*, and being vested in the privileges of God's peculiar people?

Verse 2. APOSTLE. **Much every way**] The *Jews*, in reference to the *means* and *motives* of obedience, enjoy many advantages beyond the *Gentiles*; and, principally, because *to them were committed the oracles of God*-that revelation of his will to Moses and the prophets, containing a treasure of excellencies, with which no other part of the world has been favoured; though they have most grievously abused these privileges.

Verse 3. JEW. **For what**] **τι γὰρ**, *What then, if some did not believe, &c.* If some of the Jewish nation have abused their privileges, and acted contrary to their obligations, shall their wickedness *annul* the PROMISE which God made to Abraham, that he would, by an *everlasting* covenant, be a God to him and to his seed after him? **#Ge 17:7**. Shall God, therefore, by stripping the Jews of their peculiar honour, as you intimate he will, falsify his promise to the *nation*, because some of the Jews are bad men?

Verse 4. APOSTLE. **God forbid**] **μη γένοιτο**, *Let it not be, far from it, by no means. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar, &c.* We must ever maintain that God is true, and that if, in any case, his promise appear to fail, it is because the condition on which it was given has not been complied with; which is the sense of what is written, **#Ps 51:4**: I acknowledge my sin, and condemn *myself* that the truth of thy promise (**#2Sa 7:15, 16**) to *establish my house and throne for ever*, may be vindicated when thou shalt execute that dreadful threatening, (**#2Sa 12:10**;) that *the sword shall never depart from my house*, which I own I have brought upon myself by my own iniquity. Should any man say that the promise of God had failed toward him, let him examine his heart and his ways, and he will find that he has departed out of that way in which alone God could, consistently with his holiness and truth, fulfil the promise.

Verse 5. JEW. **But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God**] May we not suppose that our unrighteousness may serve to commend and illustrate the mercy of God in keeping and fulfilling to us the promise which he made to our forefathers? The *more wicked* we are, the *more* his *faithfulness* to his ancient promise is to be admired. And if so, would not God appear unjust in taking vengeance and casting us off?

**I speak as a man]** I feel for the situation both of myself and my countrymen, and it is natural for one to speak as I do.

Verse 6. APOSTLE. **God forbid]** μη γενουτο, by no means. God cannot be *unjust*; were he unjust, he could not be qualified to judge the world, nor inflict that punishment on the unfaithful Jews, to which I refer.

Verse 7. JEW. **For if the truth of God, &c.]** But to resume my reasoning (#Ro 3:5:) If the faithfulness of God in keeping his promise made to our fathers is, through our unfaithfulness, made far more glorious than it otherwise would have been, why should we then be *blamed* for that which must redound so much to the honour of God?

Verse 8. APOSTLE. **And not** rather, &c.] *And* why do you *not say*, seeing you assume this ground, that in all cases we should do wickedly, because God, by freely pardoning, can so glorify his own grace? This is a most impious sentiment, but it follows from your reasoning; it has, indeed, been most injuriously laid to the charge of us apostles, who preach the doctrine of *free pardon, through faith, without the merit of works*; but this is so manifest a perversion of the truth that a just punishment may be expected to fall on the propagators of such a slander.

Verse 9. JEW. **What then?]** After all, have not we Jews a better claim to the privileges of the kingdom of God than the *Gentiles* have?

APOSTLE. **No, in no wise]** For I have already proved that both Jews and Gentiles are under the guilt of sin; that they are equally unworthy of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; and that they must both, equally, owe their salvation to the *mere mercy of God*. From this, to the end of the 26th verse, the apostle proceeds to prove his assertion, that *both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin*; and, that he might enforce the conviction upon the heart of the Jew, he quotes his own Scriptures, which he acknowledged had been given by the inspiration of GOD, and consequently *true*.

Verse 10. **As it is written]** See #Ps 14:1-3; from which this and the two following verses are taken.

**There is none righteous]** This is true, not only of the *Jews*, but of the *Gentiles*; of every soul of man, considered in his natural and practical state, previously to his receiving the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no righteous principle in them, and, consequently, no righteous act can be expected from them; see on #Ro 3:12. God himself is represented as looking down from heaven to see if there were any that feared and sought after him; and yet he, who cannot be deceived, could find *none*! And therefore we may safely conclude there was *none* to be found.

Verse 12. **They are all gone out of the way]** παντες εκκλιναν, they have all *diverged* from the right way, they have either *abandoned* or *corrupted* the *worship* of God: the *Jews*, in forsaking the *law* and the *prophets*, and the *Gentiles*, in acting contrary to the *law which God had written on their hearts*. And the departure of both from the *truth* proves the evil propensity of human nature in general.

**They are together become unprofitable]** *ηχρειωθησαν*. They are *useless*, good for nothing; or, as the Hebrew has it, *נאכל חר* *neelachu, they are putrid*: he views the whole mass of mankind as *slain* and *thrown together*, to *putrefy in heaps*. This is what is termed the *corruption* of human nature; they are *infected* and *infectious*. What need of the *mercy* of God to save from such a state of degeneracy!

**There is none that doeth good]** In **#Ro 3:10** it is said, *There is none righteous*; here, *There is none that doeth good*: the first may refer to the want of a *righteous principle*; the second, to the necessary consequence of the absence of such a principle. If there be no *righteousness* within, there will be no *acts* of *goodness* without.

Verse 13. **Their throat is an open sepulchre]** This and all the following verses to the end of the 18th {**#Ro 3:13-18**} are found in the *Septuagint*, but not in the *Hebrew* text; and it is most evident that it was from this version that the apostle quoted, as the verses cannot be found in any other place with so near an approximation to the apostle's meaning and words. The verses in question, however, are not found in the *Alexandrian MS*. But they exist in the *Vulgate*, the *Æthiopic*, and the *Arabic*. As the most ancient copies of the *Septuagint* do not contain these verses, some contend that the apostle has quoted them from *different parts* of Scripture; and later transcribers of the *Septuagint*, finding that the 10th, 11th, and 12th, verses were quoted from the xivth Psalm, {**Ps 14:10-12**} imagined that the rest were found originally there too, and so incorporated them in their copies, from the apostle's text.

Their throat is an open sepulchre-By their malicious and wicked words they bury, as it were, the *reputation* of all men. The whole of this verse appears to belong to their habit of *lying*, *defamation*, *slandering*, &c., by which they wounded, blasted, and poisoned the reputation of others.

Verse 14. **Whose mouth is full of cursing, &c.]** They never speak but in *profane oaths*, *blasphemies*, and malice.

Verse 15. **Their feet are swift to shed blood]** They make use of every means in their power to destroy the reputation and lives of the innocent.

Verse 16. **Destruction and misery are in their ways]** DESTRUCTION is their *work*, and MISERY to *themselves* and to the *objects* of their malice is the *consequence* of their impious and murderous conduct.

Verse 17. **And the way of peace have they not known]** They neither have peace in themselves, nor do they suffer others to live in quiet: they are brooders and fomenters of discord.

Verse 18. **There is no fear of God before their eyes.]** This completes their bad character; they are downright atheists, at least practically such. They fear not God's judgments, although his eye is upon them in their evil ways. There is not one article of what is charged against the Jews and Gentiles here that may not be found justified by the histories of both, in the most ample manner. And what was true of them in those primitive times is true of them still. With very little variation, these are the evils in which the vast mass of mankind delight and live. Look especially at men in a

state of *warfare*; look at the nations of Europe, who enjoy most of the light of God; see what has taken place among them from 1792 to 1814; see what *destruction* of millions, and what *misery* of hundreds of millions, have been the consequence of Satanic excitement in fallen, ferocious passions! O SIN, what hast thou done! How many myriads of souls hast thou *hurried, unprepared*, into the eternal world! Who, among men or angels, can estimate the greatness of this calamity! this butchery of souls! What widows, what orphans, are left to deplore their sacrificed husbands and parents, and their own consequent wretchedness! And whence sprang all this? From that, whence come all *wars* and *fightings*; the *evil desires* of men; the *lust of dominion*; the insatiable thirst for money; and the desire to be *sole* and independent. This is the sin that ruined our first parents, expelled them from paradise, and which has descended to all their posterity; and proves fully, incontestably proves, that *we* are their legitimate offspring; the fallen progeny of fallen parents; children in whose ways are *destruction* and *misery*; in whose heart there is no faith; and before whose eyes there is nothing of the fear of God.

Verse 19. **What things soever the law saith]** That the word *law*, here, does not mean the *pentateuch*, is evident from the preceding quotations, not one of which is taken from that work. Either the term *law* must here mean the *Jewish writings in general*, or that *rule of moral conduct* which God had given to both Jews and Gentiles: to the former in their own *Scriptures*; to the latter in that law written in their hearts by his own Spirit, and acknowledged in their written codes, and in their pleadings in every civil case. Now, according to this great law, *this rule of moral conduct*, whether given in a *written* revelation, as to the Jews, or by the secret inspiration of his Spirit, as in certain cases to the Gentiles, *every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world*, *πᾶς ὁ κόσμος*, both Jews and Gentiles, *stand convicted before God*: for all mankind have sinned against this law.

Verse 20. **Therefore, by the deeds of the law]** On the score of *obedience* to this moral law, *there shall no flesh*, *οὐ πᾶσα σὰρξ*, *no human being*, be justified; none can be accepted in the sight of God. And why? Because *by the law is the knowledge of sin*: it is that which *ascertains* what sin is; shows how men have deviated from its righteous demands; and sentences them to death because they have broken it. Thus the law is properly considered as the *rule of right*; and, unless God had given some such means of discovering *what SIN is*, the darkened heart of man could never have formed an adequate conception of it. For, as an acknowledged *straight edge* is the only way in which the *straightness* or *crookedness* of a *line* can be determined, so the moral obliquity of human actions can only be determined by the law of God; that *rule of right* which proceeds from his own immaculate holiness.

Verse 21. **But now the righteousness of God]** God's *method of saving sinners* is now shown, by the Gospel, to be through his own mere mercy, by Christ Jesus; *without the law*-without any right or claim which might result from obedience to the law; and is evidently that which was intended by God from the beginning; for *it is witnessed by the law and the prophets*-the *rites* and *ceremonies* of the *one*, and the *preachings* and *predictions* of the *others*, all bearing testimony to the great design of God, and to the absolute necessity there was for the sacrifice and salvation which God has provided.

Verse 22. **Even the righteousness of God]** That method of saving sinners which is not of *works*, but by faith in Christ Jesus; and it is not restrained to any *particular people*, as the law and its



privileges were, but is *unto all* mankind in its *intention* and *offer*, and becomes effectual to them that believe; for God hath now made *no difference* between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Verse 23. **For all have sinned:]** And consequently are equally helpless and guilty; and, as God is no respecter of persons, all human creatures being equally his offspring, and there being *no reason* why *one* should be *preferred* before *another*, therefore his endless mercy has embraced ALL.

**And come short of the glory of God]** και υστερουνται της δοξης του θεου· These words have been variously translated. *Failed of attaining the glory of God: Have not been able to bring glory to God: Stand in need of the glory*, that is, *the mercy of God*. The simple meaning seems to be this: that all have *sinned*, and none can enjoy God's glory but they that are *holy*; consequently both Jews and Gentiles have failed in their endeavours to attain it, as, by the works of *any law*, no human being can be justified.

Verse 24. **Being justified freely by his grace]** So far from being able to attain the glory of God by their obedience, they are all guilty: and, to be saved, must be freely pardoned by God's grace; which is shown to them who believe, through the redemption, απολυτρωσεως, the *ransom price*, which is in the sacrifice of *Christ Jesus*. The original is compounded of απο, *from*, and λυτρω, *I redeem*, and properly means the *price* laid down for the *redemption of a captive*. Comprehendit hæc Christi απολυτρωσις, quicquid is docuit, fecit et passus est, eo consilio, ut homines malis liberati, præcipue peccato, malorum fonte immunes, veram felicitatem adipiscerentur.-Rosenmuller. This redemption of Christ comprehends whatsoever he *taught, did, or suffered*, in order to free men from evil; especially to free them from sin, the source of evils; that they might attain true felicity. And that it here means the *liberation* purchased by the blood-shedding of Christ, is evident from **#Eph 1:7: We have REDEMPTION, απολυτρωσιν δια του αιματος αυτου, THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.** See also **#Col 1:14**, where the same words are found.

Λυτρα according to Suidas, is μισθος, η τα παρεχομενα υπερ ελευθεριας, επι τω λυτρωσασθαι βαρβαρων δουλειας· A reward; or *the price given to be redeemed from the slavery of the barbarians*. Schleusner, under the word απολυτρωσις, says, Negari quidem non potest, hanc vocem proprie notare redemptionem ejus, qui *captivus* detinetur, sive bello, sive alio captus sit modo, quæ fit per *pretty solutionem*; quo sensu verbum απολυτρω legitur haud raro in Scripp. Græcis. No man certainly can deny that this word properly means the *redemption of a captive*, (whether he may have been taken in war or in any other way,) which is procured by the *payment of a price*. That the word also means *any deliverance*, even where *no price* is paid down, nobody will dispute; but that it means redemption by a *price laid down*, and the redemption of the soul by the *price of the death of Christ*, the above scriptures sufficiently prove.

Verse 25. **Whom God hath set forth]** Appointed and published to be a *propitiation*, ιλαστηριον, the *mercy-seat*, or *place* of atonement; because the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on and before *that*, in order to obtain remission of sin, punishment, &c. The *mercy-seat* was the *lid* or *cover* of the ark of the *covenant*, where God was manifest in the symbol of his presence, between the cherubim; therefore the atonement that was made in *this place* was properly made *to God* himself. See **Clarke's note on "Lu 18:13"**.

**Through faith in his blood]** This shows *what* we are to understand both by the *απολυτρωσις*, *redemption*, and the *λασθηριον*, *propitiation*; viz. that they refer to the *sacrificial death* of Jesus Christ, as the *atonement* made, and the *price* paid down, for the redemption of the souls of men.

**To declare his righteousness]** *εις ενδειξις*, for the manifestation of his righteousness; his *mercy* in saving sinners, by sending Jesus Christ to make an atonement for them; thereby declaring his readiness to remit all past transgressions committed both by Jews and Gentiles, during the time in which his merciful forbearance was exercised towards the world; and this applies to all who hear the Gospel now: to them is freely offered remission of all *past sins*.

Verse 26. **To declare, I say, at this time]** To manifest *now*, by the dispensation of the *Gospel*, *his righteousness*, his infinite mercy; and to manifest it in such a way, that he might still appear to be the *just* God, and yet *the justifier*, the pardoner, *of him who believeth in Jesus*. Here we learn that God designed to give the most *evident displays* both of his *justice* and *mercy*. Of his *justice*, in requiring a *sacrifice*, and absolutely refusing to give salvation to a lost world in any other way; and of his *mercy*, in *providing* THE sacrifice which his justice required. Thus, because Jesus was an *atonement*, a *ransom price*, for the sin of the world, therefore God can, consistently with his *justice*, pardon every soul that believeth in Jesus. This is the full discovery of God's righteousness, of his wonderful method of magnifying his law and making it honourable; of showing the infinite purity of his justice, and of saving a lost world.

Hitherto, from the ninth verse, {**#Ro 3:9**} the apostle had gone on without interruption, proving that Jew and Gentile were in a state of guilt and condemnation, and that they could be saved only by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The *Jew*, finding his boasted privileges all at stake, interrupts him, and asks:-

Verse 27. **JEW. Where is boasting, then?]** *ἡ καυχησις*, *This glorying* of ours. Have we nothing in which we can *trust* for our acceptance with God? No *merit* of our *own*? Nothing accruing to us from our circumcision and being in covenant with God.

**APOSTLE, It is excluded]** *εξεκλεισθη*, *It is shut out*; the door of heaven is *shut* against every thing of this kind.

**JEW. By what law?]** By what *rule*, *doctrine*, or *reason* is it shut out? by the law *of works*? The rule of obedience, which God gave to us, and by which obedience we are accepted by him?

**APOSTLE. Nay]** Not by the law of works; glorying is not cut off or *shut out* by that; it stands in full force as the rule of life; but you have *sinned* and need pardon. *The law of works* grants no *pardon*, it requires *obedience*, and threatens the disobedient with *death*. But all glorying in the expectation of salvation, through your *own obedience*, is excluded by the *law*, the *doctrine of faith*: faith alone, in the mercy of God, through the propitiation made by the blood of Jesus, (**#Ro 3:25**), is that by which you can be *justified*, pardoned, and taken into the Divine favour.

Verse 28. **Therefore we conclude, &c.]** Seeing these things cannot be denied, viz., that all have sinned: that all are guilty, that all are helpless: that none can deliver his own soul, and that God, in



his endless mercy, has opened *a new and living way to the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, #**Heb 10:19, 20**, &c: therefore we, apostles and Christian teachers, conclude, λογίζομεθα, prove by *fair, rational consequence, that a man-any man, is justified*-has his sins blotted out, and is received into the Divine favour, *by faith in Christ's blood, without the deeds of the law*, which never could afford, either to *Jew or Gentile*, a ground for justification, because *both* have sinned against the law which God has given them, and, consequently, forfeited all right and title to the blessings which the *obedient* might claim.

Verse 29. Is he **the God of the Jews only?**] Do not begin to suppose that because you cannot be justified by the works of the law and God has in his mercy found out a new method of saving you, that therefore this mercy shall apply to the *Jews* exclusively. Is not God the maker, preserver, and redeemer, *also of the Gentiles?* Yes, *of the Gentiles also*, as much as of the *Jews*; for all have equally sinned and there is no reason, if God be disposed to show mercy at all, that he should prefer the one to the other; since they are all equally guilty, sinful, and necessitous.

Verse 30. **Seeing it is one God**] επιτεπ εινς ο θεος. This has been rendered, *Seeing God is one*. It however makes little difference in the sense: the apostle's meaning most evidently is, it is one and the same God who made both Jews and Gentiles, who shall *justify*-pardon, *the circumcision*-the believing *Jews, by faith*; and the *uncircumcision*-the believing *Gentiles*, by the same faith; as there is but *one Saviour* and one *atonement* provided for the whole.

It is fanciful to suppose that the apostle has one meaning when he says, εκ πιστεως, BY *faith*, and a different meaning when he says, δια της πιστεως, THROUGH *faith*. Both the prepositions are to be understood in precisely the same sense; only the addition of the article της, in the last case, *extends* and more pointedly *ascertains* the meaning. It is one and the same God who shall justify the believing Jews by faith; and the believing Gentiles δια της πιστεως, by THAT SAME *faith*.

Verse 31. **Do we then make void the law through faith?**] 1. By *law* here we may understand the whole of the Mosaic law, in its *rites* and *ceremonies*; of which Jesus Christ was the *subject* and the *end*. All that law had respect to *him*; and the *doctrine* of faith in Christ Jesus, which the Christian religion proclaimed, established the very claims and demands of that law, by showing that all was accomplished in the passion and death of Christ, for, *without shedding of blood*, the law would allow of *no remission*; and Jesus was that Lamb of God which was slain from the foundation of the world, in whose blood we have redemption, even the remission of sins. 2. We may understand, also, the *moral law*, that which relates to the regulation of the *manners* or *conduct* of men. This law also was *established* by the doctrine of salvation by faith; because this faith works by love, and love is the principle of obedience: and whosoever receives salvation through faith in Christ, receives power to live in holy obedience to every moral precept; for such are God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works; in which they find it their duty and their interest incessantly to live.

1. IN the notes on the preceding chapter, I have, in general, followed the *plan* of Dr. Taylor, and especially in regard to its *dialogue* form, but I have often differed much from that very learned and judicious man, in the application of many words and doctrines. He cannot allow that the death of Christ should be considered as a *price paid down* for the salvation of men and, I confess, I cannot

understand the apostle in *any other way*. Nor can I see the weight of many of his observations, nor the force of his conclusions, on any other ground than this, that the passion and death of Christ were an atonement made to Divine justice in the behalf of man; and that it is through the merit of that great sacrifice that God forgives sin. Nor can I see any reason why such great stress should be laid on *faith*, but as that lays hold on and takes up the sacrifice of Christ as a *ransom price* for the redemption of the soul from the thralldom and misery of sin and Satan.

2. This chapter contains a fine and striking synopsis of the whole Christian system. The wretched state of man is awfully exhibited, from the 10th to the 18th verse; {**#Ro 3:10-18**} and the plan of salvation, in the 24th, 25th, and 26th verses. {**#Ro 3:24-26**} A pious writer calls these the Catechism of Christian Righteousness. The following points in this catechism are worthy of high consideration-viz. *How is God glorified in us, and we in him?*-By his GRACE. *What does his grace work in us?*-True holiness. *Upon what motive?*-Because it is *pleasing* to him. *By whom does he give us salvation?*-By Jesus Christ. *How has Christ obtained this for us?*-By *redeeming* us. *What price did he give?*-His BLOOD. *What does his blood effect?*-It *reconciles* us to God. *How is it applied?*-By FAITH. *Who has given this victim of reconciliation?*- God the Father. *Why did he choose these means?*-To confound the *false* righteousness of the Gentiles; to abolish the FIGURATIVE righteousness of the Jews; and to establish his *own*. *What does this grace of God perform?*-It pardons sin and purifies the heart. *For whom is this designed?*-For *all mankind*, both Jews and Gentiles. *To whom are these blessings actually communicated?*-To all who *repent, turn from their sin, and believe* on the Lord Jesus. *Why did not God make known this grand method of salvation sooner?* 1. To make it the more valued: 2. To show his fidelity in the performance of his promises: and, 3. To make known the virtue and efficacy of the blood of Christ, which sanctifies the *present*, extends its influence to the *past*, and continues the availing sacrifice and way of salvation to all *future* ages.

3. On considering this glorious scheme of salvation, there is great danger, lest, while we stand amazed at what was done FOR us, we neglect what must be done IN us. Guilt in the conscience and sin in the heart ruin the man. Pardon in the conscience and Christ in the heart save the soul. Christ has done much to save us, and the way of salvation is made plain; but, unless he *justify* our conscience from dead works, and *purify* our *hearts* from all sin, his passion and death will profit us nothing. While we *boast* in Christ Jesus, let us see that our *rejoicing*, *καυχῆσθαι*, our *boasting*, be this, *the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world*, **#2Co 1:12**.

4. We must beware of *Antinomianism*; that is, of supposing that, because Christ has been *obedient* unto death, there is no necessity for our *obedience* to his righteous commandments. If this were so, the grace of Christ would tend to the *destruction* of the law, and not to its *establishment*. He only is saved from his sins who has the law of God written in his heart; and he alone has the law written in his heart who lives an *innocent, holy, and useful* life. Wherever Christ *lives* he works: and his work of righteousness will *appear* to his servants, and its effect will be quietness and *assurance* for ever. The life of God in the soul of man is the principle which *saves* and *preserves* eternally.

## ROMANS

### CHAPTER IV.

Abraham was justified by faith, and not by the works of the law; for his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, 1-5. David also bears testimony to the same doctrine, 6-8. Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, was justified by faith, even before he was circumcised; therefore salvation must be of the Gentiles as well as the Jews, 9-12. And the promise that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him, was made to him while he was in an uncircumcised state; and, therefore, if salvation were of the Jews alone, the law, that was given after the promise, would make the promise of no effect, 13-17. Description of Abraham's faith, and its effects, 18-92. This account is left on record for our salvation, that we might believe on Christ, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, 23-25.

### NOTES ON CHAP. IV.

The apostle, having proved in the foregoing chapter that neither Jews nor Gentiles have a right to the blessing of God's peculiar kingdom, otherwise than by *grace*, which is as free for the one as the other, in this chapter advances a *new argument* to convince the *Jew*, and to show the believing Gentile, in a clear light, the high value and strong security of the mercies freely bestowed on them in the Gospel; and, at the same time, to display the scheme of Divine providence, as laid in the counsel and will of God. His argument is taken from Abraham's case: Abraham was the *father* and *head* of the Jewish nation; he had been a *heathen*, but God pardoned him, and took him and his posterity into his special covenant, and bestowed upon them many extraordinary blessings above the rest of mankind; and it is evident that Abraham was not justified by any *obedience to law*, or *rule of right action*, but, in the only way in which a *sinner* can be justified, by *prerogative* or the *mercy* of the *lawgiver*. Now, this is the very same way in which the Gospel saves the believing Gentiles, and gives them a part in the blessings of God's covenant. Why then should the Jews oppose the Gentiles? especially as the Gentiles were actually included in the covenant made with Abraham for the promise, **#Ge 17:4**, stated that he should be *the father* of many nations: consequently, the covenant being made with Abraham, as the *head* or *father of many nations*, all in any nation who stood on the same religious principle with him, were his *seed* and with him interested in the same covenant. But Abraham stood by faith in the mercy of God pardoning his idolatry; and upon this footing the believing Gentiles stand in the Gospel; and, therefore, they are the *seed of Abraham*, and included in the covenant and promise made to him.

To all this the apostle knew well it would be objected, that it was not *faith alone*, that gave Abraham a right to the blessings of the covenant, but his *obedience to the law of circumcision*; and this, being *peculiar* to the *Jewish nation*, gave them an interest in the Abrahamic covenant; and that, consequently, whoever among the Gentiles would be interested in that covenant, ought to embrace *Judaism*, become *circumcised*, and thus come under obligation to the whole law. With this very objection the apostle very dexterously introduces his argument, **#Ro 4:1, 2**; shows that, according to the Scripture account, Abraham was justified by faith, **#Ro 4:3-5**; explains the nature of that justification, by a quotation out of the Psalms, **#Ro 4:6-9**; proves that Abraham was justified long before he was circumcised, **#Ro 4:9-11**; that the believing Gentiles are his seed to whom the promise

belongs, as well as the believing Jews, #Ro 4:12-17; and he describes Abraham's faith, in order to explain the faith of the Gospel, #Ro 4:17-25. See Dr. Taylor's notes. We may still suppose that the *dialogue* is carried on between the apostle and the Jew, and it will make the subject still more clear to assign to each his respective part. The Jew asks a single question, which is contained in the first and part of the second verses. And the apostle's answer takes up the rest of the chapter.

Verse 1. JEW. **What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?**] The *κατα σαρκα*, *pertaining to the flesh*, must here refer to the sign in Abraham's flesh, viz. his *circumcision*; on which the Jew would found his right to peculiar blessings. That this is the meaning of *κατα σαρκα*, *according to the flesh*, Dr. Taylor has proved by a collation of several parallel scriptures, which it is not necessary to produce here. We may, therefore, suppose the Jew arguing thus: But you set your argument on a wrong footing, viz. the *corrupt state* of our nation; whereas we hold our prerogative above the rest of mankind from Abraham, who is our father; and we have a right to the blessings of God's peculiar kingdom, in virtue of the promise made to *him*; his justification is the ground of ours. Now what shall we make of his case, on your principles? Of what use was his *obedience to the law of circumcision*, if it did not give him a *right* to the blessing of God? And if, by his *obedience to that law*, he obtained a grant of extraordinary blessings, then, according to your own concession, #Ro 3:27, he might ascribe his justification to something *in himself*; and, consequently, so may *we* too, in his right; and if so, this will exclude all those who are not *circumcised* as we are.

Verse 2. **For if Abraham were justified by works**] The JEW proceeds:-I conclude, therefore, that Abraham was *justified by works*, or by his *obedience to this law of circumcision*; and, consequently, he has cause for *glorying*, *καυχημα*, to *exult* in something which he has done to entitle him to these blessings. Now, it is evident that he has this *glorying*, and consequently that he was *justified by works*.

APOSTLE. **But not before God**] These seem to be the apostle's words, and contain the beginning of his answer to the arguments of the Jew, as if he had said:- Allowing that Abraham might *glory* in being called from heathenish darkness into such marvellous light, and *exult* in the privileges which God had granted to him; yet this *glorying* was not *before God* as a *reason* why those privileges should be granted; the *glorying* itself being a *consequence* of these very privileges.

Verse 3. **For, what saith the Scripture?**] The Scriptural account of this transaction, #Ge 15:6, is decisive; for there it is said, *Abraham believed God, and it was counted*, *ελογισθη*, *it was reckoned to him for righteousness*, *εις δικαιοσυνην*, *for justification*.

Verse 4. **Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.**] Therefore, if Abraham had been *justified by works*, the blessings he received would have been given to him as a *reward* for those works, and consequently his *believing* could have had no part in his *justification*, and his *faith* would have been useless.

Verse 5. **But to him that worketh not**] Which was the case with Abraham, for he was called when he was *ungodly*, i.e. an *idolater*; and, on his believing, was freely justified: and, as all men have *sinned*, none can be justified by *works*; and, therefore, justification, if it take place at all, must

take place in behalf of the *ungodly*, forasmuch as all mankind are *such*. Now, as Abraham's *state* and *mode* in which he was justified, are the plan and rule according to which God purposes to save men; and as his state was *ungodly*, and the *mode* of his justification was by *faith* in the goodness and mercy of God; and this is precisely the state of *Jews* and *Gentiles* at present; there can be no other mode of justification than by faith in that Christ who is Abraham's seed, and in whom, according to the promise, all the nations of the earth are to be blessed.

It is necessary to observe here, in order to prevent confusion and misapprehension, that although the verb *δικαιωω* has a variety of senses in the New Testament, yet here it is to be taken as implying the *pardon of sin; receiving a person into the favour of God*. See these different acceptations cited in **Clarke's note on "Ro 1:17"**, and particularly under No. 7. It is also necessary to observe, that our translators render the verb *λογιζομαι* differently in different parts of *this* chapter. It is rendered *counted*, #Ro 4:3, 5; *reckoned*, #Ro 4:4, 9, 10; *imputed*, #Ro 4:6, 8, 11, 22-24. *Reckoned* is probably the best sense in all these places.

Verse 6. **Even as David also, &c.]** David, in #Ps 32:1, 2, gives us also the true notion of this way of justification, i.e. by *faith*, without the merit of works, where he says:-

Verse 7. **Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven]** That is, the man is truly *happy* whose iniquities *αι ανομιαι*, whose *transgressions of the law* are forgiven; for by these he was exposed to the most grievous punishment. *Whose sins*, *αι αμαρτιαι*, his innumerable *deviations* from the strict rule of truth and righteousness, *are covered*-entirely removed out of sight, and thrown into oblivion. See the meaning of the word *sin* in **Clarke's note on "Ge 13:13"**.

Verse 8. **Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.]** That man is truly happy to whose *charge* God does not *reckon* sin; that is, they alone are happy who are redeemed from the curse of the law and the consequence of their ungodly life, by having their sins freely forgiven, through the mercy of God.

Verse 9. **Cometh this blessedness-upon the circumcision only]** The word *μονον*, *only*, is very properly supplied by our translators, and indeed is found in some excellent MSS., and is here quite necessary to complete the sense. The apostle's question is very nervous. If this pardon, granted in this way, be essential to *happiness*-and David says it is so-then is it the privilege of the *Jews* exclusively? This cannot be; for, as it is by the mere *mercy* of God, through *faith*, the *circumcision* cannot even claim it. But if God offer it to the circumcision, not because they have been *obedient*, for they also have *sinned*, but because of his *mere mercy*, then of course the same blessedness may be offered to the *Gentiles* who believe in the Lord Jesus. And this is evident; *for we say*, following our own Scriptures, *that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness*; he had no *merit*, he was an *idolater*; but he *believed in God*, and his *faith* was reckoned to him *εις δικαιοσυνην*, in reference to his *justification*; he brought *faith* when he could not bring *works*; and God accepted his *faith* in the place of *obedience*; and this became the *instrumental* cause of his justification.

Verse 10. **How was it then reckoned?]** In what *circumstances* was Abraham when this blessing was bestowed upon him? When he was *circumcised*, or *before*?



**Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.]** Faith was reckoned to Abraham for justification, as we read **#Ge 15:6**, (where see the note;) but circumcision was not instituted till about fourteen or fifteen years after, **#Ge 17:1**, &c.; for faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness or justification at least *one year* before Ishmael was born; compare Gen. 15, and 16. At Ishmael's birth he was eighty-six years of age, **#Ge 16:16**; and, at the institution of circumcision, Ishmael was thirteen, and Abraham ninety-nine years old. See **#Ge 17:24, 25**; and see Dr. Taylor.

Verse 11. **And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal, &c.]** So far was *obedience* to the law of *circumcision* from being the reason of his justification, that he not only received this justification *before* he was circumcised, but he received the *sign* of circumcision, as a *seal* of the pardon which he had *before* actually received. And thus he became the *father*, the great *head* and *representative*, of all them that believe; particularly the *Gentiles*, who are now in precisely the same state in which Abraham was when he received the mercy of God. Hence it appears, says Dr. Taylor, that the covenant established with Abraham, **#Ge 17:2-15**, is the *same* with that, **#Ge 12:2, 3; 15:5**, &c.; for circumcision was not a seal of any *new grant*, but of the justification and promise which Abraham had received before he was circumcised; and that justification and promise included the Gospel covenant in which we are now interested. St. Paul refers to this, **#Ga 3:8**: The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify *us*, heathens, through faith, preached before the Gospel *unto Abraham*, saying, *In thee shall all nations be blessed*. The whole of the apostle's argument, in this fourth chapter to the Romans, proves that we, believing Gentiles, are the seed of Abraham, to whom, as well as to himself, the promise was made; and that the promise made to him is the same in effect as that promise which is now made to *us*; consequently, it is the Abrahamic covenant in which we now stand; and any argument taken from the nature of that covenant, and applied to ourselves, must be good and valid. It is also undeniably evident, from this eleventh verse, as well as from **#Ge 17:1-11**, that *circumcision* was a *seal* or *sign* of the *Gospel* covenant in which we now stand. See Taylor.

There is nothing more common in the Jewish writers than the words אוֹת *oth*, SIGN, and סֵמֶן *chotham*, SEAL, as signifying the *mark* in the flesh, by the rite of circumcision; see on **#Ge 4:15**. SOHAR *Genes.*, fol. 41, col. 161, has these words: And God *set a mark upon Cain*; this *mark* was the *sign* of the covenant of circumcision. TARGUM, Cant. iii. 8: The *seal* of circumcision is in your flesh; as Abraham was *sealed* in the flesh. YALCUT RUBENI, fol. 64: Joseph did not defile the *sign* of the holy covenant; i.e. he did not commit adultery with the wife of Potiphar. Liber *Cosri*, part i., c. 115, p. 70: Circumcision is a Divine *sign* which God has placed on the member of concupiscence, to the end that we may overcome evil desire. SHEMOTH RABBA, sec. 19, fol. 118: Ye shall not eat the passover unless the SEAL of Abraham be in your flesh. *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 36: God said to Abraham, I will seal thy flesh. *Sohar Levit.* fol. 6: Abraham was sealed with the holy seal. See Schoettgen.

Verse 12. **And the father of circumcision]** He is also the *head* and *representative* of all the circumcision of all the JEWS *who walk in the steps of that faith*; who seek for justification by *faith only*, and not by the *works of the law*; for this was the faith that Abraham had before he received circumcision. For, the covenant being made with Abraham while he was a *Gentile*, he became the representative of the *Gentiles*, and they *primarily* were included in that covenant, and the Jews were brought in only *consequentially*; but *salvation*, implying *justification by faith*, originally belonged

to the *Gentiles*; and, when the Gospel came, they laid hold on *this* as their original right, having been granted to them by the free mercy of God in their father and representative, Abraham. So that the Jews, to be saved, must come under that Abrahamic covenant, in which the *Gentiles* are included. This is an unanswerable conclusion, and must, on this point, for ever confound the Jews.

Verse 13. **For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world]** This promise intimated that he should be the medium through whom the mercy of God should be communicated to the *world*, to both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and the *manner* in which *he* was justified, be the *rule* and *manner* according to which all men should expect this blessing. Abraham is here represented as having all the *world* given to him as his *inheritance*; because *in him* all nations of the earth are blessed: this must therefore relate to their being all interested in the *Abrahamic covenant*; and every person, now that the covenant is fully explained, has the privilege of claiming justification through faith, by the blood of the Lamb, in virtue of this original grant.

Verse 14. **For, if they which are of the law be heirs]** If the Jews only be heirs of the promise made to Abraham, and that on the ground of prior obedience to the law, *then faith is made void*-is entirely useless; *and the promise*, which was made to faith, is *made of none effect*.

Verse 16. **Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace]** On this account the promise is mercifully grounded, not on *obedience* to a law, but on the infinite goodness of God: and thus the *promise is sure to all the seed*-to all, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who, *believing* in Christ Jesus, have a right to all the blessings contained in the Abrahamic covenant. *All the seed* necessarily comprehends all mankind. Of the *Gentiles* there can be no doubt, for the promise was given to Abraham while he was a *Gentile*; and the salvation of the *Jews* may be inferred, because they all sprang from him *after* he became an heir of the righteousness or justification which is received by faith; for *he is the father of us all*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Dr. Taylor has an excellent note on this verse. "Here," says he, "it should be well observed that *faith* and *grace* do mutually and necessarily infer each other. For the *grace* and *favour* of God, in its own nature, requires faith in us; and faith on our part, in its own nature, supposes the *grace* or *favour* of God. If any blessing is the gift of God, in order to influence our temper and behaviour, then, in the very nature of things, it is necessary that we be sensible of this blessing, and persuaded of the grace of God that bestows it; otherwise it is not possible we should improve it. On the other hand, if *faith* in the goodness of God, with regard to any blessing, is the principle of our religious hopes and action, then it follows that the blessing is not due in strict justice, nor on the foot of law, but that it is the free gift of Divine goodness. If the promise to Abraham and his seed be of faith on their part, then it is of grace on the part of God. *And it is of faith, that it might be by grace*: grace, being the mere good will of the donor, is free and open to all whom he chooses to make the objects of it: and the Divine wisdom appointed *faith* to be the condition of the promise; because *faith* is, on our part, the most *simple* principle, bearing an exact correspondence to *grace*, and reaching as far as that can extend; that so the happy effects of the promise might extend far and wide, take in the largest compass, and be confined to no condition, but what is merely necessary in the nature of things."

Verse 17. **As it is written, I have made thee a father]** That Abraham's being a father of many nations has relation to the covenant of God made with him, may be seen, **#Ge 17:4, 5:** *Behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations: neither shall thy name any more*



*be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee*, i.e. he was constituted the *head* of many nations, the Gentile world, by virtue of the covenant, which God made then with him.

**God, who quickeneth the dead, &c.]** God is the most proper object of trust and dependence; for being *almighty, eternal, and unchangeable*, he can even raise the dead to life, and *call those things which be not as though they were*. He is the *Creator*, he gave *being* when there was *none*; he can as infallibly assure the existence of those things which are not, as if they were already actually in being. And, on this account, he can never fail of accomplishing whatsoever he has promised.

Verse 18. **Who against hope believed in hope]** The faith of Abraham bore an exact correspondence to the power and never-failing faithfulness of God; for though, in the ordinary course of things, he had not the best foundation of hope, yet he believed that he should be the *father of many nations, according to that which was spoken*; namely, that his posterity should be *like the stars of heaven for multitude, and like the dust of the earth*.

Verse 19. **He considered not his own body now dead]** He showed at once the correctness and energy of his faith: God *cannot* lie; Abraham *can* believe. It is true that, according to the course of nature, he and Sarah are so old that they cannot have children; but God is almighty, and can do whatsoever he will, and will fulfil his promise. This was certainly a wonderful degree of faith; as the promise stated that it was in *his posterity* that all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; that he had, as yet, no child by Sarah; that he was 100 years old; that Sarah was 90; and that, added to the utter improbability of her bearing at that age, she had ever been barren before. All these were so many reasons why he should not credit the promise; yet he believed; therefore it might be well said, **#Ro 4:20**, *that he staggered not at the promise*, though every thing was unnatural and improbable; *but he was strong in faith*, and, by this almost inimitable confidence, *gave glory to God*. It was to God's honour that his servant put such unlimited confidence in him; and he put this confidence in him on the rational ground that God was *fully able* to perform what he had promised.

Verse 21. **And being fully persuaded]** *πληροφορηθείς*, his *measure*: his soul was *full of confidence*, that the *truth* of God bound him to fulfil his promise and his power enabled him to do it.

Verse 22. **And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness]** The verse is thus paraphrased by Dr. Taylor: "For which reason God was graciously pleased to *place* his faith *to his account*; and to allow his fiducial reliance upon the Divine goodness, power, and faithfulness, for a *title* to the Divine blessing, which, otherwise, having been an idolater, he had no right to."

Abraham's strong faith in the promise of the coming Saviour, for this was essential to his faith, was reckoned to him for justification: for it is not said that any *righteousness*, either *his own*, or *that of another*, was imputed or reckoned to him for justification; but *it*, i.e. his *faith* in God. His faith was fully persuaded of the most merciful intentions of God's goodness; and *this*, which, in effect, laid hold on Jesus Christ, the future Saviour, was the means of his justification; being reckoned unto him in the *place* of personal righteousness, because it laid hold on the *merit* of Him who died to make an atonement for our offences, and rose again for our justification.

Verse 23. **Now it was not written for his sake alone]** The fact of Abraham's believing and receiving salvation through that faith is not recorded as a mere circumstance in the patriarch's life, intended to do *him* honour: see **#Ro 4:24**.

Verse 24. **But for us also]** The mention of this circumstance has a much more extensive design than merely to honour Abraham. It is recorded as the *model*, according to which God will save both Jews and Gentiles: indeed there can be no other way of salvation; as all have *sinned*, all must either be saved by faith through Christ Jesus, or finally perish. If God, therefore, will our salvation, it must be by *faith*; and faith contemplates his *promise*, and his *promise* comprehends the *Son of his love*.

Verse 25. **Who was delivered for our offences]** Who was delivered up to death as a *sacrifice for our sins*; for in what other way, or for what other purpose could He, who is *innocence* itself, be *delivered for our offences*?

**And was raised again for our justification.]** He was raised that we might have the fullest assurance that the death of Christ had accomplished the end for which it took place; viz. our reconciliation to God, and giving us a title to that eternal life, into which he has entered, and taken with him our *human nature*, as the first-fruits of the resurrection of *mankind*.

1. FROM a careful examination of the Divine oracles it appears that the *death of Christ* was an *atonement* or *expiation* for the *sin of the world*: *For him hath God set forth to be a PROPITIATION through FAITH in HIS BLOOD, #Ro 3:25. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ DIED for the UNGODLY, #Ro 5:6. And when we were ENEMIES, we were RECONCILED to God by the DEATH of his Son, #Ro 5:10. In whom we have REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the FORGIVENESS of SINS, #Eph 1:7. Christ hath loved us, and GIVEN HIMSELF FOR US, an OFFERING and a SACRIFICE to God for a sweet-smelling savour, #Eph 5:2. In whom we have REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the FORGIVENESS of SINS, #Col 1:14. And having made PEACE THROUGH the BLOOD of his CROSS, in the BODY of HIS FLESH, through DEATH, #Col 1:20, 22. Who GAVE HIMSELF a RANSOM for all, #1Ti 2:6. Who GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, that he might REDEEM us from all iniquity, #Tit 2:14. By which will we are sanctified, through the OFFERING of the BODY of Jesus Christ, #Heb 10:10. So Christ was once OFFERED TO BEAR THE SINS of many, #Heb 9:28. See also #Eph 2:13, 16; #1Pe 1:18, 19; #Re 5:9.* But it would be transcribing a very considerable part of the New Testament to set down all the texts that refer to this most important and glorious truth.

2. And as his *death* was an *atonement* for our sins, so his *resurrection* was the *proof* and *pledge* of our *eternal life*. See **#1Co 15:17; #1Pe 1:3; #Eph 1:13,14, &c.,&c.**

3. The doctrine of *justification by faith*, which is so nobly proved in the preceding chapter, is one of the grandest displays of the mercy of God to mankind. It is so very plain that *all* may *comprehend* it; and so *free* that all may *attain* it. What more simple than this? Thou art a sinner, in consequence condemned to perdition, and utterly unable to save thy own soul. All are in the same state with thyself, and no man can give a ransom for the soul of his neighbour. God, in his mercy, has provided a Saviour for thee. As thy life was forfeited to death because of thy transgressions, Jesus Christ has redeemed thy life by giving up his *own*; he died in *thy stead*, and has made an atonement to God for thy *transgressions*; and offers thee the pardon he has thus purchased, on the simple condition, that

thou *believe that his death is a sufficient sacrifice, ransom, and oblation for thy sin*; and that thou bring it as *such*, by confident faith, to the throne of God, and plead it in thy own behalf there. When thou dost so, thy *faith* in that sacrifice shall be imputed to thee for righteousness; i.e. it shall be the means of receiving that salvation which Christ has bought by his blood.

4. The doctrine of the *imputed righteousness of Christ*, as held by many, will not be readily found in this chapter, where it has been supposed to exist in all its proofs. It is repeatedly said that *FAITH is imputed for righteousness*; but in no place here, that *Christ's obedience to the moral law* is imputed to any man. The truth is, the *moral law* was *broken*, and did not now require *obedience*; it required this *before* it was *broken*; but, *after* it was broken, it required *death*.

Either the *sinner* must *die*, or some *one* in his *stead*: but there was none whose *death* could have been an equivalent for the transgressions of the *world* but JESUS CHRIST. Jesus therefore *died* for man; and it is through his *blood*, the merit of his *passion* and *death*, that we have redemption; and not by his *obedience to the moral law in our stead*. Our salvation was obtained at a *much higher price*. Jesus could not but be *righteous* and *obedient*; this is consequent on the immaculate purity of his nature: but his *death* was not a *necessary consequent*. As the law of God can claim only the *death* of a *transgressor*-for such only forfeit their right to life-it is the greatest miracle of all that Christ *could die*, whose *life* was never *forfeited*. Here we see the indescribable *demerit* of sin, that it *required such a death*; and here we see the stupendous mercy of God, in providing the *sacrifice* required. It is therefore by Jesus Christ's *death*, or *obedience unto death*, that we are saved, and not by his fulfilling any moral law. That he fulfilled the moral law we know; without which he could not have been qualified to be our mediator; but we must take heed lest we attribute that to *obedience* (which was the necessary consequence of his immaculate nature) which belongs to his *passion* and *death*. These were free-will offerings of eternal goodness, and not even a necessary consequence of his incarnation.

5. This doctrine of the *imputed righteousness of Christ* is capable of great abuse. To say that Christ's *personal righteousness* is imputed to every true believer, is not Scriptural: to say that he has fulfilled all righteousness for us, or in our stead, if by this is meant his fulfilment of all moral duties, is neither Scriptural nor true: that he has *died in our stead*, is a great, glorious, and Scriptural truth: that there is no redemption but through his blood is asserted beyond all contradiction; in the oracles of God. But there are a multitude of duties which the moral law requires which Christ never fulfilled in our stead, and never could. We have various duties of a domestic kind which belong solely to ourselves, in the relation of *parents, husbands, wives, servants, &c.*, in which relations Christ never stood. He has fulfilled none of these duties for us, but he furnishes grace to every true believer to fulfil them to God's glory, the edification of his neighbour, and his own eternal profit. The salvation which we receive from God's free mercy, through Christ, binds us to live in a strict conformity to the *moral law*; that law which prescribes our *manners*, and the spirit by which they should be regulated, and in which they should be performed. He who lives not in the due performance of every Christian duty, whatever faith he may profess, is either a vile hypocrite, or a scandalous *Antinomian*.

# ROMANS

## CHAPTER V.

*The effects of justification by faith, peace with God, 1. The joyous hope of eternal glory, 2. Glorifying in tribulations, 3. And gaining thereby patience, experience, and hope, 4. And having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, 5. The state of the world when Christ died for it, 6-10. Jesus Christ is an atonement, 11. Sin and death entered into the world by Adam's transgression, and all became guilty before God, 12-14. God's grace in sending Christ into the world to save fallen man, 15-19. The law is brought in to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, 20. The grace of Christ is to be as extensive in its influences and reign, as sin has been in its enslaving and destructive nature, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. V.

Is the former chapter, the apostle, having proved that the believing Gentiles are justified in the same way with Abraham, and are, in fact, his seed, included with him in the promise and covenant; he judged this a proper place, as the Jews built all their *glorifying* upon the *Abrahamic* covenant, to produce some of the chief of those privileges and blessings in which the Christian Gentile can glory, in consequence of his justification by faith. And he produces three particulars which, above all others, were adapted to this purpose. 1. The hope of eternal life, in which the law, wherein the Jew gloried, **#Ro 2:17**, was defective, **#Ro 5:2**. 2. The persecutions and sufferings to which Christians were exposed, **#Ro 5:3, 4**, and on account of which the Jews were greatly prejudiced against the Christian profession: but he shows that these had a happy tendency to establish the heart in the hope of the Gospel. 3. An interest in God, as our GOD and FATHER—a privilege upon which the Jews valued themselves highly above all nations, **#Ro 5:11**.

These three are the singular privileges belonging to the Gospel state, wherein true Christians may glory, as really belonging to *them*, and greatly redounding, if duly understood and improved, to their honour and benefit.

Verse 1. **Therefore being justified by faith]** The apostle takes it for granted that he has proved that justification is by *faith*, and that the Gentiles have an equal title with the Jews to *salvation by faith*. And now he proceeds to show the effects produced in the hearts of the believing Gentiles by this doctrine. *We are justified*—have all our sins pardoned *by faith*, as the instrumental cause; for, being *sinners*, we have no works of righteousness that we can plead.

**We have peace with God]** Before, while sinners, we were in a state of *enmity* with God, which was sufficiently proved by our *rebellion* against his authority, and our transgression of his laws; but now, being reconciled, we have peace with God. Before, while under a sense of the guilt of sin, we had nothing but terror and dismay in our own consciences; now, having our sin forgiven, we have peace in our hearts, feeling that all our guilt is taken away. *Peace* is generally the first-fruits of our justification.

**Through our Lord Jesus Christ]** His passion and death being the sole cause of our reconciliation to God.

Verse 2. **By whom also]** We are not only indebted to our Lord Jesus Christ for the free and full pardon which we have received, but our *continuance* in a justified state depends upon his gracious influence in our hearts, and his intercession before the throne of God.

**We have access]** προσαγωγήν εσχηκαμεν, *We have received this access.* It was only through Christ that we could at first *approach God*; and it is only through him that the privilege is continued to us. And this access to God, or *introduction* to the Divine presence, is to be considered as a lasting privilege. We are not brought to God for the purpose of an *interview*, but to *remain* with him; to be *his household*; and, by *faith*, to behold his face, and walk in the light of his countenance.

**Into this grace]** This *state* of favour and acceptance.

**Wherein we stand]** Having firm footing, and a just title through the blood of the Lamb to the full salvation of God.

**And rejoice]** Have solid happiness, from the *evidence* we have of our *acceptance* with Him.

**In hope of the glory of God.]** Having our sins *remitted*, and our souls *adopted* into the heavenly family, we are become *heirs*; for if *children*, then *heirs*, #Ga 4:7; and that glory of God is now become our endless inheritance. While the Jews boast of their external privileges-that they have the *temple of God* among them; that their *priests* have an *entrance* to God as their representatives, carrying before the mercy-seat the *blood of their offered victims*; we exult in being introduced by *Jesus Christ* to the Divine presence; *his blood* having been shed and sprinkled for this purpose; and thus we have, spiritually and *essentially*, all that these Jewish rites, &c., signified. We are in the peace of God, and we are happy in the enjoyment of that peace, and have a blessed foretaste of eternal glory. Thus we have heaven upon earth, and the ineffable glories of God in prospect.

Verse 3. **And not only so]** We are not only happy from being in this state of communion with our God, and the prospect of being eternally with him;

**But we glory in tribulations also]** All the sufferings we endure for the testimony of our Lord are so sanctified to us by his grace, that they become powerful instruments of increasing our happiness.

**Tribulation worketh patience]** ὑπομονην, Endurance under trials, without sustaining loss or deterioration. It is a metaphor taken from refining metals. We do not speak thus from any sudden raptures, or extraordinary sensations we may have of spiritual joy: for we find that the tribulations through which we pass are the *means* of exercising and increasing our patience, our meek forbearance of injuries received, or persecutions experienced, on account of the Gospel.

Verse 4. **And patience, experience]** δοκιμην, *Full proof, by trial*, of the truth of our religion, the solidity of our Christian state, and the faithfulness of our God. In such cases we have the opportunity

of putting our religion to the *test*; and, by every such test, it receives the *deeper sterling stamp*. The apostle uses here also a metaphor taken from the *purifying, refining, and testing* of silver and gold.

**Experience, hope]** For we thus calculate, that he who has supported us in the *past* will support us in those which may *yet come*; and as we have received so much spiritual profiting by means of the sufferings through which we have already passed, we may profit equally by those which are yet to come: and this *hope* prevents us from dreading coming trials; we receive them as *means of grace*, and find that all things work together for good to them that love God.

Verse 5. **And hope maketh not ashamed]** A hope that is not *rationally* founded will have its expectation cut off; and then *shame* and *confusion* will be the portion of its possessor. But our hope is of a different kind; it is founded on the *goodness* and *truth* of God; and our religious experience shows us that we have not misapplied it; nor exercised it on wrong or improper objects.

**Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts]** We have the most solid and convincing *testimony* of God's love to us, by that measure of it which he has communicated to our hearts. There, *ἐκκεχυται*, it is *poured out*, and diffused abroad; filling, quickening, and invigorating all our powers and faculties. This love is the *spring* of all our *actions*; it is the *motive* of our *obedience*; the *principle* through which we *love God*, we love him because he first loved us; and we love him with a love worthy of himself, because it springs from him: it is his *own*; and every *flame* that rises from this pure and vigorous *fire* must be pleasing in his sight: it *consumes* what is *unholy*; *refines* every *passion* and *appetite*; *sublimates* the whole, and *assimilates* all to itself. And we know that this is the *love of God*; it differs widely from all that is *earthly* and *sensual*. The *Holy Ghost* comes with it; by his energy it is diffused and pervades every part; and by his *light* we discover *what* it is, and *know* the *state* of grace in which we stand. Thus we are furnished to every good word and work; have produced in us the mind that was in Christ; are enabled to obey the pure law of our God in its *spiritual* sense, by *loving him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength*; and our *neighbour, any and every soul* of man, *as ourselves*. This is, or *ought* to be, the common experience of every genuine believer; but, in addition to this, the primitive Christians had, *sometimes*, the *miraculous* gifts of the Holy Spirit. These were *then needful*; and were they needful *now*, they would be again communicated.

Verse 6. **For when we were yet without strength]** The apostle, having pointed out the glorious state of the believing Gentiles, takes occasion to contrast this with their former state; and the means by which they were redeemed from it. Their former state he points out in *four* particulars; which may be applied to men in general.

I. They were *ἀσθενεῖς*, *without strength*; in a *weak, dying* state: neither able to *resist sin*, nor do any *good*: utterly devoid of *power* to extricate themselves from the misery of their situation.

II. They were *ἀσεβεῖς*, *ungodly*; without either the *worship* or *knowledge* of the true God; they had not God *in them*; and, consequently, were not partakers of the Divine nature: Satan lived in, ruled, and enslaved their hearts.



III. They were *αμαρτωλοι*, *sinner*s, #Ro 5:8, aiming at happiness, but constantly missing the mark, which is the ideal meaning of the Hebrew *חטא* *chata*, and the Greek *αμαρτανω*. See this explained, #Ge 13:13. And in *missing the mark*, they deviated from the right way; walked in the wrong way; *trespassed* in thus deviating; and, by breaking the commandments of God, not only missed the mark of *felicity*, but exposed themselves to everlasting *misery*.

IV. They were *εχθροι* *enemies*, #Ro 5:10, from *εχθος*, *hatred*, *enmity*, persons who hated God and holiness; and acted in continual *hostility* to both. What a gradation is here! 1. In our fall from God, our first apparent state is, that we are *without strength*; have lost our principle of spiritual *power*, by having lost the image of God, righteousness and true holiness, in which we were created. 2. We are *ungodly*, having lost our strength to do good; we have also lost all power to *worship God* aright. The mind which was made for God is no longer his residence. 3. We are *sinner*s; feeling we have lost our centre of rest, and our happiness, we go about seeking rest, but find none: what we have lost in losing God, we seek in earthly things; and thus are continually *missing the mark*, and multiplying transgressions against our Maker. 4. We are *enemies*; sin, indulged, increases in strength; evil *acts* engender fixed and rooted *habits*; the mind, every where poisoned with sin, increases in averseness from good; and mere *aversion* produces *enmity*; and *enmity*, *acts of hostility*, fell cruelty, &c.: so that the enemy of God hates his Maker and his service; is cruel to his fellow creatures; "a foe to God, was ne'er true friend to man;" and even torments his own soul! Though every man brings into the world the seeds of all these evils, yet it is only by *growing up* in him that they acquire their perfection-*nemo repente fuit turpissimus*-no man becomes a profligate at *once*; he arrives at it by slow degrees; and the speed he makes is proportioned to his circumstances, means of gratifying sinful passions, evil education, bad company, &c., &c. These make a great *diversity* in the moral states of men: all have the same seeds of evil-*nemo sine vitiis nascitur*-all come defiled into the world; but all have not the same opportunities of *cultivating* these seeds. Besides, as God's *Spirit* is continually convincing the world of *sin*, *righteousness*, and *judgment*, and the *ministers* of God are seconding its influence with their pious exhortations, as the *Bible* is in almost every house, and is less or more heard or read by almost every person, these evil seeds are receiving continual *blasts* and *checks*, so that, in many cases, they have not a vigorous growth. These causes make the principal *moral differences* that we find among men; though in evil *propensities* they are all radically the *same*.

That all the preceding characters are applied by some learned men to the *Gentiles*, exclusively as such, I am well aware; and that they may be all applied to them in a *national* point of view, there can be little doubt. But there are too many correspondences between the state of the *modern Gentiles* and that of the *ancient Gentiles*, to justify the propriety of applying the whole as fully to the *former* as to the *latter*. Indeed, the *four* particulars already explained point out the *natural* and *practical* state of every human being, previously to his regeneration by the grace and Spirit of God.

**In due time Christ died for the ungodly.]** This due or proper time will appear in the following particulars:-1. Christ was manifested in the flesh when the world needed him most. 2. When the powers of the human mind had been cultivated to the utmost both in *Greece* and *Rome*, and had made every possible effort, but all in vain, to find out some efficient scheme of happiness. 3. When the Jews were in the lowest state of corruption, and had the greatest need of the promised deliverer. 4. When the fulness of the time came, foretold by the prophets. 5. When both Jews and Gentiles, the one from their *jealousy*, the other from their *learning*, were best qualified to detect imposture and



to ascertain *fact*. 6. In a word, Christ came when his advent was most likely to promote its great object-glory to God in the highest, and peace and good will among men. And the *success* that attended the preaching of Christ and his apostles, together with the wide and rapid spread of the Gospel, all prove that it was the *due time*, *κατα καιρον*, the *proper season*; and that Divine wisdom was justified in fixing upon *that* time in preference to all others.

**Died for the ungodly]** ὑπερ ασεβων απεθανε, *He died INSTEAD of the ungodly*, see also #Ro 5:8; so #Lu 22:19. *The body of Christ, το υπερ υμων διδομενον*, which is given FOR you; i.e. *the life that is laid down in your STEAD*. In this way the preposition υπερ, is used by the best Greek writers.

Verse 7. **For scarcely for a righteous man will one die]** The Jews divide men, as to their moral character, into *four* classes: 1. Those who say, "what is *mine*, is *my own*; and what is *thine*, is *thy own*." These may be considered the *just*, who render to every man his due; or rather, they who neither *give* nor *take*. The second class is made up of those who say, "what is *mine*, is *thine*; and what is *thine*, is *mine*." These are they who accommodate each other, who *borrow* and *lend*. The third class is composed of those who say, "What is *mine*, is *thine*; and what is *thine*, let it be *thine*." These are the *pious*, or *good*, who give up all for the benefit of their neighbour. The fourth class are those who say, "What is *mine*, is *mine*; and what is *thine*, shall be *mine*." These are the *impious*, who *take all*, and *give nothing*.

Now, for one of the first class, who would die? There is nothing amiable in his life or conduct that would so endear him to any man, as to induce him to risk his life to save such a person.

**Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.]** This is for one of the third class, who gives all he has for the good of others. This is the truly *benevolent* man, whose life is devoted to the public good: for such a person, peradventure, some who have had their lives perhaps preserved by his bounty, would even dare to die: but such cases may be considered merely as *possible*: they exist, it is true, in *romance*; and we find a few rare instances of *friends* exposing themselves to death for their friends. See the case of Jonathan and David; Damon and Pythias, Val. Max. lib. iv. c. 7; Nisus and Euryalus, Virgil. And our Lord says, #Joh 15:13: *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*. This is the utmost we can expect among men.

Verse 8. **But God commendeth his love, &c.]** συλλογησι: God *hath set* this act of infinite mercy in the most *conspicuous* light, so as to recommend it to the *notice* and *admiration* of all.

**While we were yet sinners]** We were neither *righteous* nor *good*; but *impious* and *wicked*. See the preceding verse, and see **Clarke's note on "Ro 5:6"**.

Verse 9. **Much more then, being now justified]** If Jesus Christ, in his endless comparison towards us gave his *life* for ours, while we were yet enemies; being now justified by *his blood*-by his death on the cross, and thus reconciled to God, *we shall be saved from wrath*-from *punishment* for past transgression, *through him*-by what he has thus suffered for us.

Verse 10. **For if, when we were enemies]** See under #Ro 5:6.

**We were reconciled]** The *enmity* existing before rendered the *reconciliation* necessary. In every human heart there is a measure of *enmity* to holiness, and, consequently to the author of it. Men seldom suspect this; for one property of sin is to *blind the understanding*, so that men do not know their own state.

**We shall be saved by his life.]** For, as he *died* for our sins, so he *rose* again for our justification; and his *resurrection to life*, is the grand proof that he has accomplished whatever he had purposed in reference to the salvation of man. 2. This may be also understood of his life of *intercession*: for it is written. *He ever LIVETH to make INTERCESSION for us, #Heb 7:25*. Through this life of intercession at the right hand of God we are *spared* and blessed. 3. And it will not be amiss to consider that, as our salvation implies the *renovation* of our nature, and our being restored to the *image of God*, so, σωθησομεθα εν τη ζων αυτου, may be rendered: *we shall be saved IN his life*; for, I suppose, it is pretty generally agreed, that *the life of God in the soul of man* is essential to its salvation. 4. The *example* also of the *life of Christ* is a means of salvation. He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps: and he that followeth him, *shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of LIFE, #Joh 8:12*.

Verse 11. **We also joy** (καυχωμενοι, *we exult, or glory*) **in God, &c.]** We now *feel* that God is reconciled to us, and we are reconciled to him: the *enmity* is removed from our souls; and He, for Christ's sake, *through whom we have received the atonement, καταλλαγην, the reconciliation*, has remitted the *wrath*, the *punishment* which we deserved: and now, through this *reconciliation*, we expect an eternal glory.

It was certainly improper to translate καταλλαγη here by *atonement*, instead of *reconciliation*; as καταλλασσω signifies to *reconcile*, and is so rendered by our translators in all the places where it occurs. It does not mean the atonement here, as we generally understand that word, viz. the *sacrificial death of Christ*; but rather the *effect* of that atonement, the removal of the *enmity*, and by this, the change of our condition and state; from κατα, intensive, and αλλασσω to *change*; the *thorough change* of our state from enmity to friendship. God is reconciled to us, and *we are reconciled to him by the death of his Son*; and thus there is a glorious *change* from *enmity* to *friendship*; and we can exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received this *reconciliation*. Though *boasting* is forbidden to a Jew, because his is a *false* confidence, yet boasting is enjoined to a *Christian*, to one reconciled to God; for, his boasting is *only* in that reconciliation, and the *endless mercy* by which it is procured. So he that glorieth (boasteth) must glory in the *Lord*.

Verse 12. **Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world]** From this verse, to the conclusion of the chapter, the apostle produces a strong argument to prove that, as all mankind stood in need of the grace of God in Christ to redeem them from their sins, so this grace has been afforded equally to all, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

Dr. Taylor has given the following analysis of the apostle's mode of argumentation. The argument stands thus:-"The consequences of Christ's *obedience* extend as far as the consequences of Adam's *disobedience*. The consequences of Adam's disobedience extend to all mankind; and therefore, so do the consequences of Christ's obedience. Now, if the Jews will not allow the Gentiles any interest in Abraham, as not being naturally descended from him, yet they must own that the Gentiles are the

descendants of *Adam*, as well as themselves; and being all equally involved in the consequences of his sin, from which" (as far as the death of the body is concerned) "they shall all equally be released at the resurrection, through the *free gift* of God, therefore they could not deny the Gentiles a share in all the other blessings included in the same gift."

This argument, besides proving the main point, goes to show: 1. That the grace of God in the Gospel *abounds* beyond, or very far exceeds, the mere reversing of the sufferings brought upon mankind by Adam's one offence; as it bestows a vast surplusage of blessings which have no relation to that offence, but to the *many offences* which mankind have committed, and to the exuberance of the Divine grace. 2. To show how justly the Divine grace is founded on the obedience of Christ, in correspondence to the dispensation Adam was under, and to the consequences of his disobedience: if this disobedience involved all mankind in death, it is proper that the obedience of Christ should be the cause not only of reversing that death to all mankind, but also of other blessings which God should see fit (through him) to bestow on the world. 3. It serves to explain, and set in a clear view, the difference between the *law* and *grace*. It was the *law* which, for Adam's one transgression, subjected him and his posterity, as included in him when he transgressed, to death, without hopes of a revival. It is *grace* which restores all men to life at the resurrection; and, over and above that, has provided a gracious dispensation for the pardon of their sins; for reducing them to obedience; for guarding them against temptations; supplying them with strength and comfort; and for advancing them to eternal life. This would give the attentive Jew a just notion of the *law* which himself was under, and under which he was desirous of bringing the Gentiles.

The order in which the apostle handles this argument is this:- 1. He affirms that death passed upon all men by Adam's one transgression, **#Ro 5:12**. 2. He proves this, **#Ro 5:13, 14**: 3. He affirms there is a *correspondence* between Adam and Christ; or between the *παραπτώμα*, *offence*, and the *χαρίσμα*, *free gift*, **#Ro 5:14**. 4. This correspondence, so far as the two opposite parts answer to each other, is justly expressed, **#Ro 5:18, 19**; and there we have the main or fundamental position of the apostle's argument, in relation to the point which he has been arguing from the beginning of the epistle, namely, the *extensiveness of the grace of the Gospel*, that it actually reaches to ALL MEN, and is not confined to the *Jews*. 5. But, before he laid down this position, it was necessary that he should show that the correspondence between Adam and Christ, or between the *offence* and the *gift*, is not to be confined strictly to the bounds specified in the position, as if the *gift* reached no farther than the consequences of the *offence*; when in reality it extends vastly beyond them, **#Ro 5:15-17**. 6. Having settled these points, as previously necessary to clear his fundamental position, and fit to his argument, he then lays down that position in a diversified manner of speech, **#Ro 5:18, 19**, just as in **#1Co 15:20, 21**, and leaves us to conclude, from the premises laid down, **#Ro 5:15-17**, that the *gift* and the *grace* in its utmost extent, is as *free to all mankind* who are willing to accept of it, as this particular instance, the resurrection from the dead. They *shall* all be raised from the dead hereafter; they *may* all be quickened by the Spirit *here*. 7. Having thus shown the extensiveness of the Divine *grace*, in opposition to the dire effects of the *law* under which Adam was; that the Jews might not overlook what he intended they should particularly observe, he puts them in mind that the law given to Adam, *transgress* and *die*, was introduced into the Jewish constitution by the ministry of *Moses*; and for this end, that *the offence*, with the penalty of *death* annexed to it, *might abound*, **#Ro 5:20**. But, to illustrate tho Divine grace by setting it in contrast to the law, he immediately adds: where *sin*, subjecting to death, *hath abounded*, *grace hath much more abounded*; that is, in blessings bestowed;

it has stretched far beyond both Adam's transgression, and the transgressions under the law of Moses, **#Ro 5:20, 21**, and see the note on the first of these verses.

Upon this argument the learned doctor makes the following general remarks:-

"I. As to the order of time: the apostle carries his arguments *backwards* from the time when Christ came into the world (**#Ro 1:17**; to Rom. 4.) to the time when the *covenant* was made with Abraham, (Rom. 4.,) to the time when the judgment to condemnation, pronounced upon Adam, came upon all men, **#Ro 5:12**, to the end. And thus he gives us a view of the principal *dispensations* from the beginning of the world.

"II. In this last case, as well as in the two former, he uses *law* or forensic terms; *judgment to condemnation, justification, justify, made sinners, made righteous*. And therefore, as he considers both Jews and Gentiles at the coming of Christ, and Abraham when the covenant was made with him, so he considers Adam, and all men, *as standing in the court before the tribunal of God*. And this was the clearest and concisest way of representing his arguments." Notes, p. 283.

**Sin entered into the world]** There was neither *sin* nor *death* before the offence of Adam; after that there were *both*. Adam's transgression was therefore the *cause* of both.

**And death by sin]** *Natural* evil is evidently the effect of *moral* evil; if man had never sinned, he had never suffered. *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*, was never spoken till *after* Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit.

**Death passed upon all men]** Hence we see that all human beings partook in the consequences of Adam's sin. He propagated *his like*; and, with the rudiments of his own nature, propagated those of his *moral* likeness.

**For that all have sinned]** All are born with a sinful nature; and the seeds of this evil soon vegetate, and bring forth corresponding fruits. There has never been one instance of an immaculate human soul since the fall of Adam. Every man sins, and sins too after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Adam endeavoured to be *independent* of God; all his offspring act in the same way: hence *prayer* is little used, because prayer is the *language of dependence*; and this is inconsistent with every emotion of *original sin*. When these degenerate children of degenerate parents are detected in their sins, they act just as their parents did; each *excuses* himself, and lays the blame on *another*. What hast thou done? - *The woman whom THOU gavest me, to be with me; SHE gave me, and I did eat*. What hast THOU done? - *The SERPENT beguiled me, and I did eat*. Thus, it is extremely difficult to find a person who ingenuously acknowledges his own transgressions.

**See Clarke's notes on "Ge 3:6", &c.,** where the doctrine of original sin is particularly considered.

Verse 13. **For until the law sin was in the world]** As *death* reigned from Adam to Moses, so also did *sin*. Now, as there was no *written law* from Adam to that given to Moses, the *death* that prevailed could not be the breach of that law; for sin, so as to be punished with temporal death, is

*not imputed where there is no law*, which shows the penalty of sin to be death. Therefore, men are not subjected to death for their *own personal transgressions*, but for the sin of Adam; as, through his transgression, all come into the world with the seeds of death and corruption in their own nature, superadded to their moral depravity. All are *sinful*-all are *mortal*-and all *must die*.

Verse 14. **Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses]** This supposes, as Dr. Taylor very properly observes:-1. That *sin* was in the world from Adam to Moses. 2. That *law* was not in the world from Adam to Moses during the space of about 2500 years; for, after Adam's transgression, that law was abrogated; and, from that time, men were either under the general *covenant of grace* given to Adam or Noah, or under that which was specially made with *Abraham*. 3. That, therefore, the sins committed were not imputed unto them *to death*, for they did not sin *after the similitude of Adam's transgression*; that is, they did not, like him, transgress a law, or rule of action, to which *death*, as the penalty, was annexed. And yet-4. Death reigned over mankind during the period between Adam and Moses; therefore men did not die for their own transgressions, but in consequence of Adam's one transgression.

**Who is the figure of him that was to come.]** Adam was the *figure*, *τύπος*, the *type, pattern, or resemblance of him who was to come*; i.e. of the *Messiah*. The correspondence between them appears in the following particulars:-1. Through him, as its spring and fountain, *sin* became diffused through the world, so that every man comes into the world with sinful propensities: for *by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, #Ro 5:12*. Through Christ, as its spring and fountain, *righteousness* becomes diffused through the earth; so that every man is made partaker of a principle of grace and truth; for *he is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, #Joh 1:9*.

2. *As in Adam all die; so in Christ shall all be made alive, #1Co 15:22*. For, *since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, #1Co 15:21*.

3. *As in or through Adam guilt came upon all men, so, through Christ, the free gift comes upon all men unto justification of life, #Ro 5:18*. These alone seem to be the instances in which a similitude exists between Adam and Christ.

Verse 15. **But not as the offence, so also is the free gift.]** The same learned writer, quoted above, continues to observe:- "It is evident that the apostle, in this and the two following verses, is running a *parallel*, or making a *comparison* between the offence of Adam and its consequence; and the opposite *gift* of God and its consequences. And, in these three verses, he shows that the comparison will not hold good in all respects, because the *free gift, χάρισμα*, bestows blessings *far beyond* the consequences of the offence, and which, therefore, have no relation to it. And this was necessary, not only to prevent mistakes concerning the consequence of Adam's offence, and the extent of Gospel grace; but it was also necessary to the apostle's main design, which was not only to prove that the grace of the Gospel extends to all men, so far as it takes off the consequence of Adam's offence, [i.e. *death*, without the promise or probability of a *resurrection*,] but that it likewise extends to all men, with respect to the surplusage of blessings, in which it stretches far beyond the consequence of Adam's offence. For, the grace that takes off the consequence of Adam's offence, and the grace which *abounds* beyond it, are both included in the same *χάρισμα*, or *free gift*, which



should be well observed; for in this, I conceive, lie the connection and sinews of the argument: the *free gift*, which stands opposed to Adam's offence, and which, I think, was bestowed immediately after the offence; **#Ge 3:15**: *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*. This gift, I say, includes both the grace which exactly answers to the offence, and is that part of the grace which stretches far beyond it. And, if the one part of the gift be freely bestowed on all mankind, as the Jews allow, why not the other? especially, considering that the *whole gift* stands upon a reason and foundation in excellence and worth, vastly surpassing the malignity and demerit of the offence; and, consequently, capable of producing benefits vastly beyond the sufferings occasioned by the offence. This is the force of the apostle's argument; and therefore, supposing that in the 18th and 19th verses, **{#Ro 5:18, 19}** literally understood, he compares the consequence of Adam's offence and Christ's obedience, only so far as the one is commensurate to the other, yet his reasoning, **#Ro 5:15-17**, plainly shows that it is his meaning and intention that we should take into his conclusion the whole of the gift, so far as it can reach, to all mankind."

**For if, through the offence of one, many be dead]** That the *οι πολλοι*, *the many* of the apostle here means *all mankind* needs no proof to any but that person who finds himself qualified to deny that all men are *mortal*. And if *the many*, that is, *all mankind*, have died through the offence of one; certainly, the *gift by grace*, which abounds unto *τους πολλους*, *the many*, by Christ Jesus, must have reference to *every human being*. If the consequences of Christ's incarnation and death extend only to a *few*, or a *select number* of mankind-which, though they may be considered *many* in themselves, are *few* in comparison of the whole human race-then the consequences of Adam's sin have extended only to a *few*, or to the *same select number*: and if only *many*, and not *all* have fallen, only that *many* had need of a Redeemer. For it is most evident that the same persons are referred to in both clauses of the verse. If the apostle had believed that the benefits of the death of Christ had extended only to a select number of mankind, he never could have used the language he has done here: though, in the first clause, he might have said, without any qualification of the term, *Through the offence of one, MANY are dead*; in the 2nd clause, to be consistent with the doctrine of particular redemption, he must have said, *The grace of God, and the gift by grace, hath abounded unto SOME. As by the offence of one judgment came upon ALL men to condemnation; so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon SOME to justification, #Ro 5:18. As, by one man's disobedience, MANY were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall SOME be made righteous, #Ro 5:19. As in Adam ALL die; so, in Christ, shall SOME be made alive, #1Co 15:22*. But neither the doctrine nor the thing ever entered the soul of this divinely inspired man.

**Hath abounded unto many.]** That is, Christ Jesus died for every man; salvation is free for all; saving grace is tendered to every soul; and a measure of the Divine light is actually communicated to every heart, **#Joh 1:9**. And, as the grace is *offered*, so it may be *received*; and hence the apostle says, **#Ro 5:17**: *They which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by Christ Jesus*: and by *receiving* is undoubtedly meant not only the act of *receiving*, but *retaining* and *improving* the grace which they *receive*; and, as all may receive, so *ALL may* improve and retain the grace they do receive; and, consequently, *ALL may* be eternally saved. But of multitudes Christ still may say, *They WILL not come unto me, that they might have life*.

**Verse 16. And not as it was by one that sinned]** That is, the judicial act that followed Adam's sin (the sentence of death pronounced upon him, and his expulsion from paradise) took its rise from

his *one offence* alone, and terminated in condemnation; but the free gift of God in Christ takes its rise also from the *many offences* which men, in a long course of life, have personally committed; and the object of this grace is to justify them freely, and bring them to eternal life.

Verse 17. **Death reigned by one]** Death is here *personified*, and is represented as reigning over the human race; and death, of course, reigns unto death; he is known as reigning, by the *destruction* of his subjects.

**Shall reign in life]** Those who *receive*, retain, and improve the abundant grace offered by Jesus Christ, shall be redeemed from the *empire* of death, and exalted to the *throne* of God, to live and *reign* with him ever, world without end. See **#Re 1:5, 6; 2:7, 10, 11; 3:21**.

If we carefully compare **#Ro 5:15** with **#Ro 5:17**, we shall find that there is a correspondence between *περισσεύων*, the *abounding*, **#Ro 5:17**, and *επερίσσευσε* *hath abounded*, **#Ro 5:15**; between *της δωρεας της δικαιοσυνης*, the *gift of righteousness*, i.e. *justification*, **#Ro 5:17**, and *η δωρεα εν χαριτι*, the *gift by grace*, **#Ro 5:15**; therefore, if we understand *the abounding of grace*, and *the gift of justification*, **#Ro 5:17**, we shall understand *the grace of God*, and *the gift by grace which hath abounded unto the many*, **#Ro 5:15**. But the *abounding of grace*, and the *gift of justification*, **#Ro 5:17**, is that *grace* and *gift* which is RECEIVED by those who shall *reign in eternal life*. *Reigning in life* is the consequence of *receiving the grace and gift*. Therefore, receiving the grace is a necessary qualification on our part for reigning in life; and this necessarily implies our believing in Christ Jesus, as having died for our offences, receiving the grace so freely offered us; using the means in order to get *more* grace, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. *Receive* must here have the same sense as in **#Mt 13:20**: *He heareth the word, and anon with joy RECEIVETH it*. **#Joh 1:12**: *But as many as RECEIVED him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God*. **#Joh 3:11**: *Ye RECEIVE not our witness*. -See also **#Joh 3:32, 33**. **#Joh 5:43**: *I am come in my Father's name, and ye RECEIVE me not*. **#Joh 12:48**: *He that RECEIVETH not my words*. **#Joh 13:20**: *He that receiveth whomsoever I send, RECEIVETH me*. **#Joh 14:17**: *The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot RECEIVE*. **#Joh 17:8**: *I have given them the words which thou gavest me; and they have RECEIVED them*. In all these passages it is evident that *receiving* and not receiving imply improving or not improving.

Verse 18. **Therefore, as by the offence of one, &c.]** The Greek text of this verse is as follows: -*αρα ουν, ως δι' ενος παραπτωματος, εις παντας ανθρωπους εις κατακριμα· αυτω και ενος δικαιωματος, εις παντας ανθρωπους, εις δικαιωσιν ζωης*; which literally rendered stands thus: -*Therefore, as by one offence unto all men, unto condemnation; so likewise, by one righteousness unto all men, to justification of life*. This is evidently an elliptical sentence, and its *full* meaning can be gathered only from the context. He who had no particular purpose to serve would, most probably, understand it, from the context, thus: - *Therefore, as by one sin all men came into condemnation; so also by one righteous act all men came unto justification of life*: which is more fully expressed in the following verse. Now, leaving all particular *creeds* out of the question, and taking in the scope of the apostle's reasoning in this and the preceding chapter, is not the sense evidently this? - Through the disobedience of Adam, a sentence of condemnation to death, without any promise or hope of a resurrection, passed upon all men; so, by the obedience of Christ unto death, this one grand righteous act, the sentence was so far reversed, that death shall not *finally* triumph, for all shall again be restored to life. *Justice* must have its due; and therefore all must *die*.



The *mercy* of God, in Christ Jesus, shall have its due also; and therefore all shall be put into a *salvable* state here, and the whole human race shall be raised to *life* at the great day. Thus both *justice* and *mercy* are magnified; and neither is exalted at the expense of the other.

The apostle uses *three* remarkable words in these three verses:-1. δικαιωμα, *justification*, #Ro 5:16. 2. δικαιοσυνη, which we render *righteousness*, #Ro 5:17; but is best rendered *justification*, as expressing that *pardon* and *salvation* offered to us in the Gospel: see **Clarke's note on "Ro 1:16"**. 3. δικαιωσις, which is also rendered *justification*, #Ro 5:18.

The *first* word, δικαιωμα, is found in the following places: #Lu 1:6; #Ro 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18; 8:4; #Heb 9:1, 10; #Re 15:4; 19:8; to which the reader may refer. δικαιωμα signifies, among the Greek writers, *the sentence of a judge, acquitting the innocent, condemning and punishing the guilty*; but in the New Testament it signifies whatever God has *appointed* or *sanctioned* as a *law*; and appears to answer to the Hebrew מִשְׁפַּט יְהוָה mishpat Yehovah, *the statute or judgment, of the Lord*; It has evidently this sense in #Lu 1:6: *Walking in all the commandments and ORDINANCES, δικαιωμασι, of the Lord blameless*; and it has the like meaning in the principal places referred to above; but in the verse in question it most evidently means *absolution, or liberation, from punishment*, as it is opposed to κατακριμα, *condemnation*, #Ro 5:18. See **Clarke's note on "Ro 1:16"**; and see Schleusner in voce.

The *second* word, δικαιοσυνη, I have explained at large in #Ro 1:16, already referred to.

The *third* word δικαιωσις, is used by the Greek writers, almost universally, to denote the *punishment* inflicted on a *criminal*, or the *condemnatory sentence* itself; but in the New Testament where it occurs only *twice*, (#Ro 4:25, *he was raised for our justification, δικαιωσιν*; and #Ro 5:18, *unto justification of life, δικαιωσιν ζωης*.) it evidently signifies the *pardon* and *remission of sins*; and seems to be nearly synonymous with δικαιωμα. Dr. Taylor thinks that "*δικαιοσυνη* is *Gospel pardon and salvation*, and has reference to *God's mercy*. δικαιωμα is our being set *quite clear and right*; or our being restored to *sanctity, delivered from eternal death, and being brought to eternal life*; and has reference to the *power and guilt of sin*. And δικαιωσις he thinks may mean no more than our being *restored to life at the resurrection*." Taking these in their order, there is: *First, pardon of sin. Secondly, purification of heart, and preparation for glory. Thirdly, the resurrection of the body, and its being made like to his glorious body, so as to become a fit tabernacle for the soul in a glorified state for ever and ever.*

The same writer observes that, when the apostle speaks of *forgiveness of sins* simply, he insists on *faith* as the *condition*; but *here*, where he speaks of *justification of life*, he mentions no *condition*; and therefore he supposes *justification of life*, the phrase being understood in a forensic sense, to mean no more than the *decree* or *judgment* that determines the *resurrection from the dead*. This is a favourite point with the doctor, and he argues largely for it: see his *notes*.

Verse 19. **For, as by one man's disobedience, &c.]** The explanation of this verse has been anticipated in the foregoing.

Verse 20. **The law entered that (ὅτι) the offence might abound.]** After considering various opinions concerning the true meaning of this verse, (see under **#Ro 5:12**.) I am induced to prefer my own, as being the most simple. By *law* I understand the Mosaic law. By *entering in*, παρεισηλθεν, or, rather, *coming in privily*, see **#Ga 2:4**, (the only place where it occurs besides,) I understand the temporary or limited use of that law, which was, as far as its *rites* and *ceremonies* are considered, confined to the Jewish people, and to them only till the Messiah should come; but considered as the *moral law*, or *rule of conscience* and *life*, it has in its *spirit* and *power* been *slipped in-introduced* into every conscience, *that sin might abound*-that the true nature, deformity, and extent of sin might appear; for by the law is the knowledge of sin: for how can the finer deviations from a *straight line* be ascertained, without the application of a known *straight edge*? Without this *rule of right*, sin can only be known in a sort of *general* way; the innumerable *deviations* from *positive rectitude* can only be known by the application of the righteous statutes of which the law is composed. And it was necessary that this law should be given, that the true nature of *sin* might be seen, and that men might be the better prepared to receive the Gospel; finding that this law worketh only *wrath*, i.e. denounces *punishment*, forasmuch as all have sinned. Now, it is wisely ordered of God, that wherever the Gospel goes there the law goes also; *entering* every where, that *sin* may be seen to *abound*, and that men may be led to despair of salvation in any other way or on any terms but those proposed in the Gospel of Christ. Thus the sinner becomes a *true penitent*, and is glad, seeing the curse of the *law* hanging over his soul, to flee for refuge to the hope set before him in the *Gospel*. On the meaning of *ὅτι*, in various places, see Chrysost. vol. iii. p. 241. See also Hammond on the word in his notes on the New Testament.

**But where sin abounded]** Whether in the *world*, or in the *heart* of the *individual*, being discovered by this most pure and righteous *law*, *grace did much more abound*: not only *pardon* for all that is past is offered by the Gospel, so that all the transgressions for which the soul is condemned to death by the law, are freely and fully forgiven; but also the Holy Spirit, in the abundance of his gifts and graces, is communicated, so as to prepare the receiver for an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Thus the grace of the Gospel not only redeems from death, and restores to life, but brings the soul into such a relationship with God, and into such a participation of eternal glory, as we have no authority to believe ever would have been the portion even of *Adam* himself, had he even eternally retained his innocence. Thus, *where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound*.

Verse 21. **That as sin hath reigned unto death]** As extensively, as deeply, as universally, as *sin*, whether implying the *act of transgression* or the *impure principle* from which the act proceeds, or *both*. *Hath reigned*, subjected the whole earth and all its inhabitants; the whole soul, and all its powers and faculties, *unto death*, *temporal* of the body, *spiritual* of the soul, and *eternal* of *both*; *even so*, as extensively, deeply, and universally *might grace reign*-filling the whole earth, and pervading, purifying, and refining the whole soul: *through righteousness*-through this doctrine of *free salvation* by the blood of the Lamb, and by the principle of *holiness* transfused through the soul by the Holy Ghost: *unto eternal life*-the proper object of an immortal spirit's hope, the only sphere where the human intellect can rest, and be happy in the *place* and *state* where God is; where he is seen AS HE IS; and where he can be enjoyed with out interruption in an eternal progression of knowledge and beatitude: *by Jesus Christ our Lord*-as the *cause* of our salvation, the *means* by which it is communicated, and the *source* whence it springs. Thus we find, that the salvation from sin here is as extensive and complete as the *guilt* and *contamination* of sin; death is conquered, hell

disappointed, the devil confounded, and sin totally destroyed. Here is glorying: *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to God and his Father, be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen. Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen and Amen.*

WHAT highly interesting and momentous truths does the preceding chapter bring to our view! No less than the doctrine of the *fall of man* from original righteousness; and the *redemption of the world* by the incarnation and death of Christ. On the subject of the FALL, though I have spoken much in the notes on Genesis, chap. 3, yet it may be necessary to make a few farther observations:-

1. That all mankind have *fallen under the empire of death*, through this original transgression, the apostle most positively asserts; and few men who profess to believe the Bible, pretend to dispute. This point is indeed ably stated, argued, and proved by Dr. Taylor, from whose observations the preceding notes are considerably enriched. But there is one point which I think not less evident, which he has not only not included in his argument, but, as far as it came in his way, has argued against it, viz. the degeneracy and moral corruption of the human soul. As no man can account for the death brought into the world but on the ground of this primitive transgression, so none can account for the moral evil that is in the world on any other ground. It is a fact, that every human being brings into the world with him the seeds of *dissolution* and *mortality*. Into this state we are fallen, according to Divine revelation, through the one offence of Adam. This fact is proved by the mortality of all men. It is not less a fact, that every man that is born into the world brings with him the seeds of *moral evil*; these he could not have derived from his Maker; for the most pure and holy God can make nothing impure, imperfect, or unholy. Into this state we are reduced, according to the Scripture, by the transgression of Adam; for by this one man sin entered into the world, as well as *death*.

2. The fact that all come into the world with sinful propensities is proved by another fact, that every man sins; that sin is his *first* work, and that no exception to this has ever been noticed, except in the human nature of Jesus Christ; and that exempt case is sufficiently accounted for from this circumstance, that *it* did not come in the common way of natural generation.

3. As *like produces its like*, if Adam became mortal and sinful, he could not communicate properties which he did not possess; and he must transmit those which constituted his natural and moral likeness: therefore all his posterity must resemble himself. Nothing less than a constant miraculous energy, presiding over the formation and development of every human body and soul, could prevent the seeds of natural and moral evil from being propagated. That these seeds are not produced in men by their own *personal transgressions*, is most positively asserted by the apostle in the preceding chapter; and that they exist *before* the human being is capable of actual transgression, or of the exercise of *will* and *judgment*, so as to *prefer* and *determine*, is evident to the most superficial observer: 1st, from the most marked evil *propensities* of children, long before reason can have any influence or control over passion; and, 2ndly, it is demonstrated by the *death* of millions in a state of infancy. It could not, therefore, be *personal* transgression that produced the evil *propensities* in the one case, nor *death* in the other.

4. While misery, death, and sin are in the world, we shall have incontrovertible proofs of the fall of man. Men may dispute against the doctrine of *original sin*; but such facts as the above will be a standing irrefragable argument against every thing that can be advanced against the doctrine itself.

5. The *justice* of permitting this general infection to become diffused has been strongly oppugned. "Why should the innocent suffer for the guilty?" As God made man to propagate his like on the earth, his transmitting the same kind of nature with which he was formed must be a necessary consequence of that propagation. He might, it is true, have cut off for ever the offending pair; but this, most evidently, did not comport with his creative designs. "But he might have rendered Adam incapable of sin." This does not appear. If he had been incapable of sinning, he would have been incapable of holiness; that is, he could not have been a *free agent*; or in other words he could not have been an *intelligent* or intellectual being; he must have been a mass of inert and unconscious matter. "But God might have cut them off and created a new race." He certainly might; and what would have been gained by this? Why, just nothing. The *second* creation, if of *intelligent* beings at all, must have been precisely similar to the first; and the circumstances in which these last were to be placed, must be exactly such as infinite wisdom saw to be the most proper for their predecessors, and consequently, the most proper for *them*. They also must have been in a state of *probation*; they also must have been placed under a *law*; this law must be guarded by *penal sanctions*; the *possibility* of transgression must be the same in the second case as in the first; and the lapse as *probable*, because as *possible* to this second race of human beings as it was to their predecessors. It was better, therefore, to let the same pair continue to fulfil the great end of their creation, by propagating their like upon the earth; and to introduce an *antidote* to the *poison*, and by a dispensation as strongly expressive of *wisdom* as of *goodness*, to make the ills of life, which were the consequences of their transgression, the means of correcting the evil, and through the wondrous economy of grace, sanctifying even these to the eternal good of the soul.

6. Had not God provided a *Redeemer*, he, no doubt, would have terminated the whole mortal story, by cutting off the original transgressors; for it would have been unjust to permit them to propagate their like in such circumstances, that their offspring must be *unavoidably* and eternally wretched.

God has therefore provided such a Saviour, the *merit* of whose *passion* and *death* should apply to every human being, and should infinitely transcend the *demerit* of the original transgression, and put every soul that received that grace (and ALL *may*) into a state of greater excellence and glory than that was, or could have been, from which Adam, by transgressing, fell.

7. The state of *infants* dying before they are capable of hearing the Gospel, and the state of *heathens* who have no opportunity of knowing how to escape from their corruption and misery, have been urged as cases of peculiar hardship. But, first, there is no evidence in the whole book of God that any child dies eternally for Adam's sin. Nothing of this kind is intimated in the Bible; and, as Jesus took upon him *human nature*, and condescended to be born *of a woman* in a state of perfect helpless *infancy*, he has, consequently, sanctified this state, and has said, without limitation or exception, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God*. We may justly infer, and all the *justice* as well as the *mercy* of the Godhead supports the inference, that all human beings, dying in an *infant* state, are regenerated by that *grace of God which*

*bringeth salvation to all men, #Tit 2:11*, and go infallibly to the kingdom of heaven. As to the *Gentiles*, their case is exceedingly clear. The apostle has determined this; see **#Ro 2:14, 15**, and the notes there. He who, in the course of his providence, has withheld from them the *letter* of his *word*, has not denied them the *light* and *influence* of his SPIRIT; and will judge them in the great day only according to the grace and means of moral improvement with which they have been favoured. No man will be finally damned because he was a *Gentile*, but because he has not made a proper use of the grace and advantages which God had given him. Thus we see that the Judge of all the earth has done right; and we may rest assured that he will eternally act in the same way.

8. The term FALL we use metaphorically, to signify *degradation*: literally, it signifies *stumbling*, so as to lose the *centre of gravity*, or the *proper poise* of our bodies, in consequence of which we are precipitated on the ground. The term seems to have been borrowed from the παραπτωμα of the apostle, **#Ro 5:15-18**, which we translate *offence*, and which is more literally FALL, from παρα, *intensive*, and πιπτω, *I fall*; a grievous, dangerous, and ruinous fall, and is property applied to *transgression* and *sin* in general; as every act is a *degradation* of the soul, accompanied with *hurt*, and *tending to destruction*. The term, in this sense, is still in common use; the degradation of a man in power we term his *fall*; the impoverishment of a *rich* man we express in the same way; and when a man of piety and probity is overcome by any act of sin, we say he is *fallen*; he has descended from his spiritual eminence, is degraded from his spiritual excellence, is impure in his soul, and becomes again exposed to the displeasure of his God.

## ROMANS

### CHAPTER VI.

*We must not abuse the boundless goodness of God by continuing in sin, under the wicked persuasion that the more we sin the more the grace of God will abound, 1. For, having been baptized into Christ, we have professed thereby to be dead to sin, 2-4. And to be planted in the likeness of his resurrection, 5. For we profess to be crucified with him, to die and rise again from the dead, 6-11. We should not, therefore, let sin reign in our bodies, but live to the glory of God, 12-14. The Gospel makes no provision for living in sin, any more than the law did; and those who commit sin are the slaves of sin, 15-19. The degrading and afflictive service of sin, and its wages eternal death; the blessed effects of the grace of God in the heart, of which eternal life is the fruit, 20-23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VI.

The apostle, having proved that salvation, both to Jew and Gentile, must come through the Messiah, and be received *by faith only*, proceeds in this chapter to show the obligations under which both were laid to live a holy life, and the means and advantages they enjoyed for that purpose. This he does, not only as a thing highly and indispensably necessary in itself—for without holiness none can see the Lord—but to confute a calumny which appears to have been gaining considerable ground even at that time, viz. that the doctrine of *justification by faith alone, through the grace of Christ Jesus*, rendered obedience to the moral law useless; and that the more evil a man did, the more the grace of God would abound to him, in his redemption from that evil. That this calumny was then propagated we learn from **#Ro 3:8**; and the apostle defends himself against it in the 31st verse of the same, {**#Ro 3:31**} by asserting, that his doctrine, far from making void the law, served to establish it. But in this and the two following chapters he takes up the subject in a regular, formal manner; and shows both Jews and Gentiles that the principles of the Christian religion absolutely require a *holy heart* and a *holy life*, and make the amplest provisions for both.

Verse 1. **Shall we continue in sin]** It is very likely that these were the words of a believing *Gentile*, who—having as yet received but little instruction, for he is but just brought *out* of his *heathen* state to believe in Christ Jesus—might imagine, from the manner in which God had magnified his mercy, in blotting out his sin on his simply believing on Christ, that, supposing he even gave way to the evil propensities of his own heart, his transgressions could do him no hurt now that he was in the favour of God. And we need not wonder that a *Gentile*, just emerging from the deepest darkness, might entertain such thoughts as these; when we find that eighteen centuries after this, persons have appeared in the most Christian countries of Europe, not merely asking such a question, but defending the doctrine with all their might; and asserting in the most unqualified manner, "that believers were under *no obligation* to keep the *moral law* of God; that Christ had kept it for them; that his keeping it was *imputed to them*; and that God, who had exacted it from *Him*, who was their surety and representative, would not exact it from *them*, forasmuch as it would be *injustice* to require *two payments* for *one debt*." These are the *Antinomians* who once flourished in this land, and whose race is not yet utterly extinct.



Verse 2. **God forbid]** μη γενοιτο, *Let it not be; by no means; far from it; let not such a thing be mentioned!*-Any of these is the meaning of the Greek phrase, which is a strong expression of surprise and disapprobation: and is not properly rendered by our *God forbid!* for, though this may express the *same thing*, yet it is not proper to make the sacred NAME so familiar on such occasions.

**How shall we, that are dead to sin]** The phraseology of this verse is common among Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins. To *DIE to a thing or person*, is to *have nothing to do with it or him*; to be *totally separated* from them: and *to live to a thing or person* is to be *wholly given up to them*; to have the most *intimate connection* with them. So Plautus, Clitell. iii. 1, 16: *Nihil mecum tibi, MORTUUS TIBI SUM. I have nothing to do with thee; I am DEAD to thee.* Persa, i. 1, 20: *Mihi quidem tu jam MORTUUS ERAS, quia te non visitavi. Thou wast DEAD to me because I visited thee not.* So Ælian, Var. Hist. iii. 13: *ὅτι φιλοινωτατον εἶδος το τῶν ταπυρων, τοσουτον, ὥστε ζην αὐτους ἐν οἶνῳ, καὶ το πλειστον τοῦ βίου ἐν τῇ πρὸς αὐτον ὁμιλίᾳ καταναλίσκειν* "The Tapyrians are such lovers of wine, that they LIVE in wine; and the principal part of their LIFE is DEVOTED to it." They live to wine; they are insatiable drunkards. See more examples in *Wetstein* and *Rosenmuller*.

Verse 3. **Know ye not, &c.]** Every man who believes the Christian religion, and receives baptism as the proof that he believes it, and has taken up the profession of it, is bound thereby to a life of righteousness. *To be baptized into Christ*, is to receive the doctrine of Christ crucified, and to receive baptism as a proof of the genuineness of that faith, and the obligation to live according to its precepts.

**Baptized into his death?]** That, as Jesus Christ in his crucifixion died completely, so that no spark of the *natural* or *animal life* remained in his body, so those who profess his religion should be so completely *separated* and *saved from sin*, that they have no more *connection* with it, nor any more *influence* from it, than a *dead man* has with or from his *departed spirit*.

Verse 4. **We are buried with him by baptism into death]** It is *probable* that the apostle here alludes to the mode of administering baptism by *immersion*, the whole body being put *under the water*, which seemed to say, the man is *drowned*, is *dead*; and, when he came up out of the water, he seemed to have a *resurrection* to life; *the man is risen again; he is alive!* He was, therefore, supposed to throw off his old *Gentile* state as he threw off his clothes, and to assume a new character, as the baptized generally put on new or fresh garments. I say it is *probable* that the apostle alludes to this mode of immersion; but it is not absolutely *certain* that he does so, as some do imagine; for, in the next verse, our being incorporated into Christ by *baptism* is also denoted by our being *planted*, or rather, *grafted together in the likeness of his death*; and Noah's ark *floating* upon the water, and *sprinkled by the rain from heaven*, is a *figure* corresponding to *baptism*, #1Pe 3:20, 21; but neither of these gives us the same idea of the outward form as *burying*. We must be careful, therefore, not to lay too much stress on such circumstances. Drowning among the ancients was considered the most noble kind of death; some think that the apostle may allude to this. The grand point is, that this baptism represents our *death to sin*, and our *obligation to walk in newness of life*: without which, of what use can it or any other *rite* be?

**Raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father]** From this we learn, that as it required the *glory of the Father*, that is, his *glorious energy*, to raise up from the grave the dead body of Christ,



so it requires the same glorious energy to *quicken* the dead soul of a sinner, and enable him to walk in newness of life.

Verse 5. **For if we have been planted together]** *συμφυτοὶ γεγόναμεν*. Dr. Taylor observes, that our translation does not completely express the apostle's meaning. *τα συμφυτά* are such plants as grow, the one *upon* and *in the other*, deriving sap and nourishment from it, as the *mistletoe* upon the *oak*, or the *scion* upon the *stock* in which it is grafted. He would therefore translate the words: *For if we have been growers together with Christ in the likeness of his death*, (or in that which is like his death,) *we shall be also growers together with him in the likeness of his resurrection*; or in that which is like *his resurrection*. He reckons it a beautiful metaphor, taken from *grafting*, or making the scion grow together with a new stock.

But if we take the word *planted* in its usual sense, we shall find it to be a metaphor as beautiful and as expressive as the former. When the seed or plant is inserted in the ground, it derives from that ground all its nourishment, and all those juices by which it becomes developed; by which it increases in size, grows firm, strong, and vigorous; and puts forth its leaves, blossoms, and fruit. The *death* of Jesus Christ is represented as the *cause* whence his *fruitfulness*, as the author of eternal salvation to mankind is derived; and genuine believers in him are represented as being *planted in his death*, and growing *out of it*; deriving their growth, vigour, firmness, beauty, and fruitfulness from it. In a word, it is by his *death* that Jesus Christ redeems a lost world; and it is from that vicarious death that believers derive that pardon and holiness which makes them so *happy in themselves*, and so *useful to others*. This sacrificial death is the *soil* in which they are *planted*; and from which they derive their *life, fruitfulness*, and their final *glory*.

Verse 6. **Our old man is crucified with him]** This seems to be a farther extension of the *same metaphor*. When a seed is planted in the earth, it appears as if the *whole body* of it *perished*. All *seeds*, as they are commonly termed, are composed of *two parts*; the *germ*, which contains the *rudiments* of the future plant; and the *lobes*, or *body* of the seed, which by their decomposition in the ground, become the first nourishment to the extremely fine and delicate roots of the embryo plant, and support it till it is capable of deriving grosser nourishment from the common soil. The *body* dies that the *germ* may live. Parables cannot go on all fours; and in metaphors or figures, there is always some *one* (or more) remarkable property by which the doctrine intended is illustrated. To apply this to the purpose in hand: how is the principle of *life* which Jesus Christ has *implanted* in us to be brought into full effect, vigour, and usefulness? By the destruction of the *body of sin*, our *old man*, our wicked, corrupt, and fleshly self, is to be crucified; to be as truly *slain* as Christ was crucified; that our souls may as truly be raised from a death of sin to a life of righteousness, as the body of Christ was raised from the grave, and afterwards ascended to the right hand of God. But how does this part of the metaphor apply to Jesus Christ? Plainly and forcibly. Jesus Christ took on him a body; a body *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, **#Ro 8:3**; and gave up that body to death; through which *death* alone an atonement was made for sin, and the way laid open for the vivifying Spirit, to have the fullest access to, and the most powerful operation in, the human heart. Here, the *body* of Christ *dies* that he may be a *quickenning Spirit* to mankind. Our *body of sin* is destroyed by this quickening Spirit, that henceforth we should live unto Him who died and rose again. Thus the metaphor, in all its leading senses, is complete, and applies most forcibly to the subject in question. We find that *παλαιος ανθρωπος*, *the old man*, used here, and in **#Eph 4:22**, and **#Col 3:9**, is the same as *the flesh*

with its affections and lusts, #Ga 5:24; and the body of the sins of the flesh, #Col 2:11; and the very same which the Jewish writers term **אדם הקדמוני**, *Adam hakkadmoni*, the *old Adam*; and which they interpret by **יצר הרע**, *yetsar hara*, "evil concupiscence," the same which we mean by *indwelling sin*, or the *infection of our nature*, in consequence of the *fall*. From all which we may learn that the design of God is to counterwork and destroy the very spirit and soul of sin, that we shall *no longer serve it*, **δουλεύειν**, no longer be its *slaves*. Nor shall it any more be capable of performing its essential functions than a *dead body* can perform the functions of natural life.

Verse 7. **He that is dead is freed from sin.**] **δεδικαιώται**, literally, *is justified* from sin; or, *is freed* or *delivered* from it. Does not this simply mean, that the man who has received Christ Jesus by faith, and has been, through believing, made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, has had his *old man*, all his *evil propensities* destroyed; so that he is not only justified freely from all sin, but wholly sanctified unto God? The context shows that this is the meaning. Every instance of violence is done to the whole scope and design of the apostle, by the opinion, that "this text is a proof that believers are *not* fully saved from sin *in this life*, because only he *that is dead is freed from sin*." Then *death* is his *justifier* and *deliverer*! Base and abominable insinuation, highly derogatory to the glory of Christ! Dr. Dodd, in his note on the preceding verse, after some inefficient criticism on the word **καταργηθῇ**, *destroyed*, which, he thinks, should be rendered *enervated*, has the following most unevangelical sentiment: "The body of sin in believers is, indeed, an enfeebled, conquered, and deposed tyrant, and the stroke of *death finishes its destruction*." So then, the death of Christ and the influences of the Holy Spirit were only sufficient to *depose* and *enfeeble* the tyrant sin; but *OUR death* must come in to effect his *total destruction*! Thus our death is, at least *partially*, our *Saviour*; and thus, that which was an *effect* of *sin* (for sin entered into the world, and death by sin) becomes the *means* of finally *destroying* it! That is, the *effect* of a *cause* can become so powerful, as to react upon that cause and produce its annihilation! The *divinity* and *philosophy* of this sentiment are equally absurd. It is the blood of Christ alone that cleanses from all unrighteousness; and the *sanctification* of a believer is no more dependent on *death* than his *justification*. If it he said, "that believers do not cease from sin till they die;" I have only to say, they are such *believers* as do not make a proper use of their *faith*; and what can be said more of the whole herd of transgressors and infidels? They *cease* to sin, when they *cease to breathe*. If the Christian religion bring no other privileges than this to its upright followers, well may we ask, wherein doth the *wise man* differ from the *fool*, for they have both one end? But the whole Gospel teaches a contrary doctrine.

Verse 8. **Now if we be dead with Christ**] According to what is stated in the preceding verses. See particularly on the 5th verse. {#Ro 6:5}

Verse 9. **Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more**] So we, believing in Christ Jesus, and having a death unto sin, and a life unto righteousness, should sin no more. If we be risen indeed with Christ, we should seek the things above, and set our affections on things above, and not on the earth. The man who walks in humble, loving obedience, to an indwelling Christ, sin has no more dominion over his soul than death has over the immortal and glorified body of his Redeemer.

Verse 10. **He died unto sin once**] On this clause Rosenmuller speaks thus: **τη αμαρτια απεθανεν εφ'απαξ**: *propter peccatum mortuus est semel*, et quidem misera morte. **τη αμαρτια**, i.e. **επερ της αμαρτιας**, *ad expianda peccata*; res ipsa docet aliter *homines αποθνησκειν τη αμαρτια*,

*aliter* Christum: amat Paulus parallelismum, in quo interpretando multa cautione opus est." "*He died unto sin once*: i.e. *he died on account of sin*, and truly a miserable death. τη αμαρτια, is the same as υπερ της αμαρτιας, *for the expiation of sin*. Common sense teaches us that *men die to sin* in one sense; *Christ in another*: St. Paul loves parallelisms, in the interpretation of which there is need of much caution." From the whole scope of the apostle's discourse it is plain that he considers the death of Christ as a death or sacrifice for sin; a sin-offering: in this sense no *man* has ever died *for* sin, or ever can die.

Verse 11. **Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead]** Die as truly *unto* sin, as he died *for* sin. Live as truly *unto* God, as he lives *with* God. This seems to be the spirit of the apostle's meaning.

Verse 12. **Let not sin therefore reign]** This is a prosopopœia, or *personification*. Sin is represented as a *king, ruler, or tyrant*, who has the *desires of the mind* and the *members of the body* under his control so that by influencing the *passions* he governs the *body*. Do not let sin reign, do not let him work; that is, let him have no *place, no being* in your souls; because, wherever he is he governs, less or more: and indeed *sin* is not *sin* without this. How is sin known? By evil *influences* in the mind, and *evil acts* in the *life*. But do not these *influences* and these *acts* prove his *dominion*? Certainly, the very existence of an evil thought to which *passion* or *appetite attaches itself*, is a proof that there sin has *dominion*; for without dominion such passions could not be excited. Wherever sin is *felt*, there sin has *dominion*; for sin is *sin* only as it *works* in *action* or *passion* against God. Sin cannot be a *quiescent* thing: if it do not *work* it does not *exist*.

**That ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.]** αυτη εν ταις επιθυμιαις αυτου. This clause is *wanting* in the most ancient and reputable MSS. and in the principal versions. *Griesbach* has left it out of his text; and Professor *White* says, *Certissime* delenda: "These words should certainly be expunged" they are not necessary to the apostle's argument; it was enough to say, *Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it*. If it be *there* it will *reign* there; and its reign supposes, necessarily, the *subjection* of that *in* which it reigns. A king reigns when his *laws are enforced*, and the *people obey them*. When there is no *executive* government there is no *reign*. There may be a *royal shadow* there, but there is no *king*.

Verse 13. **Neither yield ye your members]** Do not yield to temptation. It is no sin to be *tempted*, the sin lies in *yielding*. While the sin exists only in Satan's solicitation, it is the *devil's sin*, not *ours*: when we yield, we make the devil's sin our *own*: then we ENTER INTO *temptation*. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Satan himself cannot *force* you to sin: till he *wins over* your *will*, he cannot bring you into *subjection*. You may be *tempted*; but *yield* not to the temptation.

**Yield yourselves unto God]** Let God have your *wills*; keep them ever on his side; there they are *safe*, and there they will be *active*. Satan *cannot force* the will, and God will not. Indeed it would cease to be *will* were it *forced* by either: it is essential to its *being* that it be *free*.

**And your members as instruments, &c.]** Let soul and body be employed in the service of your Maker; let him have your *hearts*; and with them, your *heads*, your *hands*, your *feet*. *Think* and devise what is pure; *speak* what is true, and to the use of edifying; *work* that which is just and good; and *walk* steadily in the *way* that leads to everlasting felicity. Be holy *within* and holy *without*.

Verse 14. **Sin shall not have dominion over you]** God delivers you from it; and if you again become subject to it, it will be the effect of your own choice or negligence.

**Ye are not under the law]** That law which exacts obedience, without giving *power* to obey; that condemns every transgression and every unholy thought without providing for the extirpation of evil or the pardon of sin.

**But under grace.]** Ye are under the merciful and beneficent dispensation of the *Gospel*, that, although it requires the strictest conformity to the will of God, affords sufficient power to be thus conformed; and, in the death of Christ, has provided *pardon* for all that is past, and *grace* to help in every time of need.

Verse 15. **Shall we sin because we are not under the law]** Shall we abuse our high and holy calling because we are not under that *law* which makes no provision for *pardon*, but are under that *Gospel* which has opened the fountain to wash away all sin and defilement? Shall we sin because grace abounds? Shall we do evil that good may come of it? This be far from us!

Verse 16. **To whom ye yield yourselves]** Can you suppose that you should continue to be the *servants* of Christ if ye give way to *sin*? Is he not the *master* who exacts the *service*, and to whom the service is performed? *Sin* is the service of *Satan*; *righteousness* the service of *Christ*. If ye sin ye are the servants of Satan, and not the servants of God.

The word *δουλος*, which we translate *servant*, properly signifies *slave*; and a slave among the Greeks and Romans was considered as his *master's property*, and he might dispose of him as he pleased. Under a *bad* master, the lot of the slave was most oppressive and dreadful; his ease and comfort were never consulted; he was treated worse than a beast; and, in many cases, his life hung on the mere caprice of the master. This state is the state of every poor, miserable sinner; he is the slave of Satan, and his own evil lusts and appetites are his most cruel task-masters. The same word is applied to the *servants of Christ*, the more forcibly to show that they are their *Master's property*; and that, as he is infinitely *good* and *benevolent*, therefore his service must be perfect freedom. Indeed, he exacts no obedience from them which he does not turn to their eternal advantage; for this master has no self-interest to secure. **See Clarke on "Ro 1:1".**

Verse 17. **But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin]** This verse should be read thus: *But thanks be to God that, although ye were the servants of sin, nevertheless ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered unto you; or, that mould of teaching into which ye were cast.* The apostle does not thank God that they *were sinners*; but that, *although* they were *such*, they had now received and obeyed the Gospel. The Hebrew phrase, **#Isa 12:1**, is exactly the same as that of the apostle here: *In that day thou shalt say, I will praise thee, for thou wast angry with me: that is, although thou wast angry with me, thou hast turned away thy wrath, &c.*

**That form of doctrine]** *τυπον διδασχης*; here Christianity is represented under the notion of a *mould*, or *die*, into which they were cast, and from which they took the *impression* of its excellence. The *figure* upon this *die* is the image of God, *righteousness and true holiness*, which was stamped on their souls in believing the Gospel and receiving the Holy Ghost. The words *εις ον παρεδοθητε*

τυπον refer to the *melting of metal*; which, when it is liquified, is cast into the mould, that it may receive the impression that is *sunk* or *cut* in the mould; and therefore the words may be literally translated, *into which mould of doctrine ye have been cast*. They were *melted* down under the preaching of the word, and then were capable of receiving the stamp of its purity.

Verse 18. **Being then made free from sin]** ελευθερωθεντες is a term that refers to the *manumission* of a *slave*. They were *redeemed* from the slavery of sin, and became the servants of righteousness. Here is another *prosopopœia*: both *sin* and *righteousness* are *personified*: *sin* can enjoin no *good* and *profitable* work; *righteousness* can require none that is *unjust* or *injurious*.

Verse 19. **I speak after the manner of men]** This phrase is often used by the Greek writers to signify what was *easy to be comprehended*; what was *ad captum vulgi*, level with common understandings, delivered in a *popular style*; what was different from the *high flights* of the *poets*, and the studied *sublime obscurity* of the *philosophers*.

**Because of the infirmity of your flesh]** As if he had said: I make use of metaphors and figures connected with well-known natural things; with your *trades* and *situation* in life; because of your inexperience in heavenly things, of which ye are only just beginning to know the *nature* and the *names*.

**Servants to uncleanness, &c.]** These different expressions show how deeply immersed in and enslaved by sin these Gentiles were before their conversion to Christianity. Several of the particulars are given in the first chapter of this epistle.

Verse 20. **Ye were free from righteousness.]** These two servitudes are incompatible; if we cannot serve *God* and *Mammon*, surely we cannot serve *Christ* and *Satan*. We must be either *sinner*s or *saint*s; God's *servants* or the devil's *slaves*. It cannot be as a good mistaken man has *endeavoured* to *sing*:—

"To good and evil equal bent,  
I'm both a devil and a saint."

I know not whether it be possible to paint the utter prevalence of sin in stronger colours than the apostle does here, by saying *they were FREE from righteousness*. It seems tantamount to that expression in Genesis, #Ge 6:5, where, speaking of the total degeneracy of the human race, the writer says, *Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*. They were all corrupt; they were altogether abominable: there was none that did good; no, not one.

Verse 21. **What fruit had ye then in those things]** God designs that every man shall reap *benefit* by *his* service. What *benefit* have ye derived from the *service of sin*?

**Whereof ye are now ashamed?]** Ye blush to remember your former life. It was *scandalous* to yourselves, *injurious* to others, and highly *provoking* to God.



**The end of those things is death.]** Whatever sin may promise of pleasure or advantage, the end to which it necessarily tends is the destruction of body and soul.

Verse 22. **But now being made free from sin]** As being *free from righteousness* is the finished character of a *sinner*, so being *made free from sin* is the finished character of a *genuine Christian*.

**And become servants to God]** They were transferred from the service of one master to that of another: they were freed from the slavery of sin, and engaged in the service of God.

**Fruit unto holiness]** *Holiness* of heart was the *principle*; and *righteousness* of life the fruit.

Verse 23. **For the wages of sin is death]** The second death, everlasting *perdition*. Every sinner *earns* this by long, sore, and painful service. O! what pains do men take to get to hell! Early and late they toil at sin; and would not Divine justice be in their *debt*, if it did not pay them their due wages?

**But the gift of God is eternal life]** A man may MERIT *hell*, but he cannot MERIT *heaven*. The apostle does not say that the *wages of righteousness is eternal life*: no, but that this eternal life, even to the righteous, is το χάρισμα του θεου, THE *gracious GIFT* of GOD. And even this gracious gift comes *through Jesus Christ our Lord*. He alone has procured it; and it is given to all those who find redemption in his blood. A sinner goes to hell because he *deserves* it; a righteous man goes to heaven because Christ *has died for him*, and communicated that grace by which his sin is pardoned and his soul made holy. The word οψωνια, which we here render *wages*, signified the *daily pay* of a Roman soldier. So every sinner has a *daily pay*, and this pay is *death*; he has *misery* because he sins. Sin constitutes hell; the sinner has a hell in his own bosom; all is *confusion* and *disorder* where God does not reign: every indulgence of sinful passions increases the disorder, and consequently the misery of a sinner. If men were as much in earnest to get their souls saved as they are to prepare them for perdition, heaven would be highly peopled, and devils would be their own companions. And will not the *living* lay this to heart?

1. IN the preceding chapter we see the *connection* that subsists between the doctrines of the Gospel and the practice of Christianity. A *doctrine* is a *teaching, instruction, or information* concerning some *truth* that is to be believed, as essential to our salvation. But all teaching that comes *from God*, necessarily leads *to him*. That Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification, is a glorious doctrine of the Gospel. But this is of no use to him who does not die to sin, rise in the likeness of his resurrection, and walk in newness of life: this is the *use* that should be made of the *doctrine*. Every doctrine has its *use*, and the use of it consists in the *practice* founded on it. We hear there is a *free pardon*-we go to God and receive it; we hear that we may be made *holy*-we apply for the sanctifying Spirit; we hear there is a *heaven of glory*, into which the righteous alone shall enter-we watch and pray, believe, love, and obey, in order that, when he doth appear, we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. *Those* are the *doctrines*; these are the *uses* or *practice* founded on those doctrines.

2. It is strange that there should be found a person believing the whole Gospel system, and yet living in sin! SALVATION FROM SIN is the *long-continued sound*, as it is the spirit and design, of the

Gospel. Our *Christian name*, our *baptismal covenant*, our *profession of faith* in Christ, and avowed belief in his word, all call us to this: can it be said that we have any louder calls than these? Our *self-interest*, as it respects the happiness of a godly life, and the glories of eternal blessedness; the pains and wretchedness of a life of sin, leading to the worm that never dies and the fire that is not quenched; second most powerfully the above calls. Reader, lay these things to heart, and: answer this question to God; *How shall I escape, if I neglect so great salvation?* And then, as thy conscience shall answer, let thy mind and thy hands begin to act.



## ROMANS

### CHAPTER VII.

*The law has power over a man as long as he lives, 1. And a wife is bound to her husband only as long as he lives, 2, 3. Christian believers are delivered from the Mosaic law by Christ Jesus, and united to God, 5-7. By the law is the knowledge of sin, 8. But it gives no power over it, 9-11. Yet it is holy, just, and good, 12. How it convinces of sin, and brings into bondage, 13-24. No deliverance from its curse but by Jesus Christ, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VII.

The apostle having, in the preceding chapter, shown the *converted Gentiles* the obligations they were under to live a holy life, addresses himself here to the *Jews* who might hesitate to embrace the Gospel; lest, by this means, they should renounce the *law*, which might appear to them as a renunciation of their allegiance to God. As they rested in the law, as sufficient for justification and sanctification, it was necessary to convince them of their mistake. That the law was insufficient for their *justification* the apostle had proved, in chapters iii., iv., and v.; that it is insufficient for their *sanctification* he shows in this chapter; and introduces his discourse by showing that a believing Jew is discharged from his obligations to the law, and is at liberty to come under another and much happier constitution, viz. that of the Gospel of Christ, **#Ro 7:1-4**. In **#Ro 7:5** he gives a general description of the state of a *Jew*, in servitude to sin, considered as under *mere law*. In **#Ro 7:6** he gives a summary account of the state of a *Christian*, or believing Jew, and the advantages he enjoys under the Gospel. Upon **#Ro 7:5** he comments, from **#Ro 7:7-25**, and upon **#Ro 7:6** he comments, **#Ro 8:1-11**.

In explaining his position in **#Ro 7:5** he shows: 1. That the law reaches to all the branches and latent principles of sin, **#Ro 7:7**. 2. That it subjected the sinner to death, **#Ro 7:8-12**, without the expectation of pardon. 3. He shows the reason why the Jew was put under it, **#Ro 7:13**. 4. He proves that the law, considered as a rule of action, though it was spiritual, just, holy, and good in itself, yet was insufficient for sanctification, or for freeing a man from the power of inbred sin. For, as the prevalency of sensual appetites cannot wholly extinguish the voice of *reason* and *conscience*, a man may acknowledge the law to be holy, just, and good, and yet his *passions* reign within him, keeping him in the most painful and degrading servitude, while the law supplied no power to deliver him from them, **#Ro 7:14-24**, as that power can only be supplied by the grace of Jesus Christ, **#Ro 7:25**. See Taylor.

Verse 1. **For I speak to them that know the law]** This is a proof that the apostle directs this part of his discourse to the *Jews*.

**As long as he liveth?] Or, as long as IT liveth;** law does not extend its influence to the dead, nor do *abrogated* laws bind. It is all the same whether we understand these words as speaking of a law *abrogated*, so that it cannot command; or of its objects being dead, so that it has none to bind. In either case the *law* has no force.

Verse 2. **For the woman which hath a husband]** The apostle illustrates his meaning by a familiar instance. A married woman is bound to her husband while he lives; but when her husband is dead she is discharged from the law by which she was bound to him *alone*.

Verse 3. **So then, if, while her husband liveth]** The object of the apostle's similitude is to show that each party is equally bound to the other; but that the death of either dissolves the engagement.

**So-she is no adulteress, though she be married to another]** And do not imagine that this change would argue any disloyalty in you to your Maker; for, as he has determined that this law of ordinances shall cease, you are no more bound to it than a woman is to a deceased husband, and are as free to receive the Gospel of Christ as a woman in such circumstances would be to remarry.

Verse 4. **Wherefore, my brethren]** This is a parallel case. You were once under the law of Moses, and were bound by its injunctions; but now ye are become dead to that law-a modest, inoffensive mode of speech, for, *The law, which was once your husband, is dead*; God has determined that it shall be no longer in force; so that now, as a woman whose husband is dead is freed from the law of that husband, or from her conjugal vow, and may legally be married to another, so God, who gave the law under which ye have hitherto lived, designed that it should be in force only till the advent of the Messiah; that advent *has* taken place, the *law* has consequently ceased, and now ye are called to take on you the yoke of the *Gospel*, and lay down the yoke of the law; and it is the design of God that you should do so.

**That ye should be married to another-who is raised from the dead]** As *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, the object of God in giving the law was to unite you to Christ; and, as he has died, he has not only abolished that law which condemns every transgressor to *death*, without any hope of a *revival*, but he has also made that atonement for sin, by his own death, which is represented in the sacrifices prescribed by the law. And as Jesus Christ is *risen again from the dead*, he has thereby given the fullest proof that by his death he has procured the resurrection of mankind, and made that atonement required by the law. *That we should bring forth fruit unto God*-we, Jews, who believe in Christ, have, in consequence of our *union* with him, received the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; so that we bring forth that fruit of holiness unto God which, without this union, it would be impossible for us to produce. Here is a delicate allusion to the case of a promising and numerous progeny from a legitimate and happy marriage.

Verse 5. **For, when we were in the flesh]** When we were without the Gospel, in our carnal and unregenerated state, though believing in the law of Moses, and performing the *rites* and *offices* of our religion.

**The motions of sins, which were by the law]** τα παθηματα των αμαρτιων, the *passions of sins*, the *evil propensities to sins*; to every particular sin there is a *propensity*: one propensity does not excite to all kinds of sinful acts; hence the apostle uses the *plural* number, the *PASSIONS* or *propensities of SINS*; sins being not more various than their *propensities* in the unregenerate heart, which excite to them. These παθηματα, *propensities*, constitute the *fallen nature*; they are the disease of the heart, the pollution and corruption of the soul.

**Did work in our members]** The evil propensity acts *εν τοις μελεσιν*, in the whole nervous and muscular system, applying that stimulus to every part which is necessary to excite them to action.

**To bring forth fruit unto death.]** To produce those acts of transgression which subject the sinner to death, temporal and eternal. When the apostle says, *the motion of sin which were by the law*, he points out a most striking and invariable characteristic of sin, viz. its *rebellious nature*; it ever acts *against law*, and the most powerfully against *known law*. *Because* the law requires obedience, *therefore* it will transgress. The law is equally against *evil passions* and *evil actions*, and both these exert themselves against it. So, these motions which were by the law, became roused into the most powerful activity by the prohibitions of the law. They were comparatively dormant till the law said, *thou shalt NOT do this, thou shalt DO that*; then the *rebellious* principle in the evil propensity became roused, and *acts of transgression* and *omissions of duty* were the immediate consequences.

Verse 6. **But now we are delivered from the law]** We, who have believed in Christ Jesus, are delivered from that yoke by which we were bound, which sentenced every transgressor to *perdition*, but provided no *pardon* even for the *penitent*, and no *sanctification* for those who are weary of their inbred corruptions.

**That being dead wherein we were held]** To us believers in Christ this commandment is abrogated; we are transferred to another constitution; that law which kills ceases to bind us; it is dead to us who have believed in Christ Jesus, who is the end of the law for justification and salvation to every one that believes.

**That we should serve in newness of spirit]** We are now brought under a more spiritual dispensation; now we know the *spiritual import* of all the Mosaic precepts. We see that the law referred to the Gospel, and can only be fulfilled by the Gospel.

**The oldness of the letter.]** The merely literal rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices are now done away; and the *newness of the spirit*, the true intent and meaning of all are now fully disclosed; so that we are got from an imperfect state into a state of perfection and excellence. We sought justification and sanctification, pardon and holiness, by the law, and have found that the law could not give them: we have sought these in the Gospel scheme, and we have found them. We serve God now, not according to the old literal sense, but in the true spiritual meaning.

Verse 7. **Is the law sin?]** The apostle had said, **#Ro 7:6:** *The motions of sins, which were by the law, did bring forth fruit unto death*; and now he anticipates an objection, "Is therefore the law sin?" To which he answers, as usual, *μη γενοιτο*, *by no means*. Law is only the means of *disclosing*; this sinful propensity, not of *producing* it; as a bright beam of the sun introduced into a room shows; millions of motes which appear to be dancing in it in all directions; but these were not introduced by the light: they were there before, only there was not light enough to make them manifest; so the evil propensity was there before, but there was not light sufficient to discover it.

**I had not known sin, but by the law]** Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor have properly remarked the skill used by St. Paul in dexterously avoiding, as much as possible, the giving offence to the Jews:

and this is particularly evident in his use of the word *I* in this place. In the beginning of the chapter, where he mentions their knowledge of the law, he says YE; in {#Ro 7:4} the 4th verse he joins himself with them, and says *we*; but *here*, and so to the end of the chapter, where he represents the power of sin and the inability of the law to subdue it, he appears to leave *them* out, and speaks altogether in the *first* person, though it is plain he means all those who are under the law. So, #Ro 3:7, he uses the singular pronoun, *why am I judged a sinner?* when he evidently means the whole body of unbelieving Jews.

There is another circumstance in which his address is peculiarly evident; his demonstrating the insufficiency of the law under colour of vindicating it. He knew that the Jew would take fire at the least reflection on the law, which he held in the highest veneration; and therefore he very naturally introduces him catching at that expression, #Ro 7:5, *the motions of sins, which were by the law*, or, notwithstanding the law. "What!" says this Jew, "do you vilify the law, by charging it with favouring sin?" By no means, says the apostle; I am very far from charging the law with favouring sin. *The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just, and good*, #Ro 7:12. Thus he writes in vindication of the law; and yet at the same time shows: 1. That the law requires the most extensive obedience, discovering and condemning sin in all its most secret and remote branches, #Ro 7:7. 2. That it gives sin a deadly force, subjecting every transgression to the *penalty of death*, #Ro 7:8-14. And yet, 3. supplies neither help nor hope to the sinner, but leaves him under the power of sin, and the sentence of death, #Ro 7:14, &c. This, says Dr. Taylor, is the most ingenious turn of writing I ever met with. We have another instance of the same sort, #Ro 13:1-7.

It is not likely that a *dark, corrupt* human heart can *discern* the will of God. His *law* is his *will*. It *recommends* what is just, and right, and good and forbids what is improper, unjust, and injurious. If God had not revealed himself by this law, we should have done precisely what many nations of the earth have done, who have not had this revelation-put darkness for light, and sin for acts of holiness. While the human *heart* is its own *measure* it will rate its workings according to its own propensities; for *itself* is its highest *rule*. But when God gives a true insight of his own perfections, to be applied as a *rule* both of *passion* and *practice*, then sin is discovered, and discovered too, to be *exceedingly sinful*. So strong propensities, because they appear to be inherent in our nature, would have passed for *natural* and *necessary operations*; and their *sinfulness* would not have been discovered, if the law had not said, *Thou shalt not covet*; and thus determined that the *propensity* itself, as well as its *outward operations*, is *sinful*. The law is the *straight edge* which determines the quantum of *obliquity* in the *crooked line* to which it is applied.

It is natural for man to do what is unlawful, and to desire especially to do that which is forbidden. The heathens have remarked this propensity in man.

Thus LIVY, xxxiv. 4:—

Luxuria-ipsis vinculis, sicut fera bestia, irritata.

"Luxury, like a wild beast, is *irritated* by its very *bonds*."

*Audax omnia perpeti  
Gens humana ruit per vetitun; nefas.*

"The presumptuous human race obstinately rush into *prohibited* acts of wickedness."  
HOR. *Carm.* lib. i. Od. iii. ver. 25.

And OVID, *Amor.* lib. ii. Eleg. xix. ver. 3:—

Quod licet, ingratum est; quod non licet, acrius urit.

"What is *lawful* is *insipid*; the strongest propensity is excited towards that which is *prohibited*."

And again, *Ib.* lib. iii. E. iv. ver. 17:—

Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata.

"Vice is provoked by every strong restraint,  
Sick men long most to *drink*, who know they *mayn't*."

The same poet delivers the same sentiment in another place:—

Acrior admonitu est, irritaturque retenta  
Et crescit rabies: remoraminaque ipsa nocebant.  
METAM. lib. iii. ver. 566.

"Being admonished, he becomes the more obstinate; and his fierceness is irritated by restraints.  
Prohibitions become incentives to greater acts of vice."

But it is needless to multiply examples; this most wicked principle of a sinful, fallen nature, has been felt and acknowledged by ALL *mankind*.

Verse 8. **Sin, taking occasion by the commandment]** I think the pointing, both in this and in the 11th verse, to be wrong: the comma should be after *occasion*, and not after *commandment*. *But sin taking occasion, wrought in me by this commandment all manner of concupiscence.* There are different opinions concerning the meaning of the word αφορμη, which we here translate *occasion*. Dr. Waterland translates the clause, *Sin, taking* ADVANTAGE. Dr. Taylor contends that all commentators have mistaken the meaning of it, and that it should be rendered *having received* FORCE. For this acceptance of the word I can find no adequate authority except in its etymology-απο, *from*, and ορμη, *impetus*. The word appears to signify, in general, whatsoever is necessary for the completion or accomplishment of any particular purpose. Xenophon uses αφορμαι εις τον βιον to signify *whatever is necessary for the support of life*. There is a personification in the text: sin is, represented as a *murderer* watching for *life*, and snatching at every means and embracing every opportunity to carry his fell purpose into effect. The miserable sinner has a murderer, sin, within him; this murderer can only destroy life in *certain circumstances*; finding that the law condemns the object of his cruelty to death, he takes occasion from this to work in the soul all manner of

concupiscence, evil and irregular desires and appetites of every kind, and, by thus increasing the evil, exposes the soul to more condemnation; and thus it is represented as being *slain*, #Ro 7:11. That is, the *law*, on the *evidence* of those *sinful dispositions*, and their corresponding *practices*, condemns the sinner to death: so that he is *dead in law*. Thus the very *prohibition*, as we have already seen in the preceding verse, becomes the instrument of exciting the evil propensity; for, although a sinner has the general propensity to do what is evil, yet he seems to feel most delight in transgressing *known law*: *stat pro ratione voluntas*; "I will do it, because I will."

**For without the law, sin was dead.]** Where there is no law there is no transgression; for sin is the transgression of the law; and no fault can be imputed unto *death*, where there is no *statute* by which such a fault is made a *capital offence*.

Dr. Taylor thinks that *χωρίς νομον*, *without the law*, means the *time* before the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, which took in the space of 430 years, during which time the people were under the Abrahamic covenant of grace; and *without the law* that was given on Mount Sinai, the sting of death, which is sin, had not power to slay the sinner; for, from the time that Adam sinned, the law was not *re-enacted* till it was given by Moses, #Ro 5:13. The Jew was then *alive*, because he was not under the law subjecting him to death for his transgressions; *but when the commandment came*, with the penalty of death annexed, *sin revived*, and *the Jew died*. Then the sting of death acquired *life*; and the Jew, upon the first transgression, was *dead in law*. Thus sin, the sting of death, received *force* or *advantage* to destroy by the commandment, #Ro 7:8, 11.

**All manner of concupiscence.]** It *showed* what was *evil* and *forbade* it; and then the principle of *rebellion*, which seems essential to the very nature of sins rose up against the prohibition; and he was the more strongly incited to *disobey* in proportion as *obedience* was enjoined. Thus the apostle shows that the law had authority to *prohibit*, *condemn*, and *destroy*; but no *power* to *pardon* sin, *root out enmity*, or *save the soul*.

The word *ἐπιθυμία*, which we render *concupiscence*, signifies simply *strong desire* of any kind; but in the New Testament, it is generally taken to signify *irregular* and *unholy desires*. Sin in the mind is the *desire* to *do*, or to *be*, what is *contrary* to the *holiness* and *authority* of GOD.

**For without the law, sin was dead.]** This means, according to Dr. Taylor's hypothesis, the *time* previous to the giving of the law. See before. But it seems also consistent with the apostle's meaning, to interpret the place as implying the time in which Paul, in his unconverted Jewish state, had not the proper knowledge of the law-while he was unacquainted with its *spirituality*. He felt *evil desire*, but he did not know the *evil* of it; he did not consider that the law tried the *heart* and its *workings*, as well as *outward actions*. This is farther explained in the next verse.

Verse 9. **I was alive without the law once]** Dr. Whitby paraphrases the verse thus:-"For the seed of Abraham *was alive without the law once*, before the law was given, I being not obnoxious to death for that to which the law had not threatened death; *but when the commandment came*, forbidding it under that penalty, *sin revived*, and *I died*; i.e. it got strength to draw me to sin, and to condemn me to death. Sin is, in Scripture, represented as an enemy that seeks our ruin and destruction; and takes all occasions to effect it. It is here said *to war against the mind*, #Ro 7:23; elsewhere, *to war against*



the soul, #1Pe 2:11; to surround and beset us, #Heb 12:1; to bring us into bondage and subjection, and get the dominion over us, #Ro 6:12; to entice us, and so to work our death, #Jas 1:14-16; and to do all that Satan, the grand enemy of mankind, doth, by tempting us to the commission of it. Whence Chrysostom, upon those words, #Heb 12:4: *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood*, *προς την αμαρτιαν αςταγωνιζομενοι*, *striving against sin*; represents sin as an armed and flagrant adversary. When, therefore, it finds a law which threatens death to the violater of it, it takes occasion thence more earnestly to tempt and allure to the violation of it, that so it may more effectually subject us to death and condemnation on that account; *for the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law*, condemning us to death for transgressing it. Thus, when God had forbidden, on pain of death, the eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, Satan thence took occasion to tempt our first parents to transgress, and so slew them, or made them subject to death; *εξηπατησε*, *he deceived them*, #Ge 3:13; #1Ti 2:14; which is the word used #Ro 7:11. The phrase, *without the law, sin was dead*, means, that sin was then (before the law was given) comparatively dead, as to its power of condemning to death; and this sense the antithesis requires; *without the law, αμαρτια νεκρα, εγω δε εζων*, *sin was dead, but I was living*; *but when the commandment came*, (i.e. the law,) *sin revived, and I died*. How were men living *before* the law, but because then no law condemned them? Sin, therefore, must be then *dead*, as to its condemning power. How did they die when the law came but by the law condemning them to death? Sin therefore *revived*, then, as to its power of condemning, which it received first from the *sin of Adam*, which brought death into the world; and next, from the *law of Moses*, which entered that the offence might abound, and reign more unto death, #Ro 5:20, 21. For though sin was in the world from Adam to Moses, or until the law was given, yet it was not imputed unto death, when there was no law that did threaten death; so that death reigned from that interval by virtue of Adam's sin alone; even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, i.e. against a positive law, forbidding it under the penalty of death; which law being delivered by Moses, *sin revived*; i.e. it had again its force to condemn men as before to death, by virtue of a law which threatened death. And in this sense the apostle seems to say, #Ga 3:19, *the law was added because of transgressions*, to convince us of the wrath and punishment due to them; and that *the law*, therefore, *worketh wrath*, because *where no law is there is no transgression*, #Ro 4:15, *subjecting us to wrath*; or no such sense of the Divine wrath as where a plain Divine law, threatening death and condemnation, is violated." See *Whitby*, in loco.

Verse 10. **And the commandment]** Meaning the law in general, which was ordained to life; the rule of righteousness teaching those statutes which if a man do he shall live in them, #Le 18:5, *I found*, by transgressing it, *to be unto death*; for it only presented the duty and laid down the penalty, without affording any strength to resist sin or subdue evil propensities.

Verse 11. **Sin, taking occasion]** Sin, deriving strength from the law, threatening death to the transgressor, (see Clarke's note on "Ro 7:8"), *deceived me*, drew me aside to disobedience, promising me gratification honour, independence, &c., as it promised to Eve; for to her history the apostle evidently alludes, and uses the very same expression, *deceived me*, *εξηπατησε με*. See the preceding note; and see the Septuagint, #Ge 3:13.

**And by it slew me.]** Subjected me to that death which the law denounced against transgressors; and rendered me miserable during the course of life itself. It is well known to scholars that the verb *αποκτελλειν* signifies not only to slay or kill, but also to make wretched. Every sinner is not only



exposed to *death* because he has sinned, and must, sooner or later, die; but he is *miserable* in both body and mind by the influence and the effects of sin. He lives a *dying life*, or a *living death*.

Verse 12. **Wherefore the law is holy]** As if he had said, to soothe his countrymen, to whom he had been showing the absolute insufficiency of the law either to justify or save from sin: I do not intimate that there is any thing *improper* or *imperfect* in the law as a *rule of life*: it prescribes what is *holy, just, and good*; for it comes from a holy, just, and good God. The LAW, which is to regulate the whole of the *outward conduct*, is holy; and the COMMANDMENT, *Thou shalt not covet*, which is to regulate the *heart*, is not less so. All is excellent and pure; but it neither pardons sin nor purifies the heart; and it is because it is holy, just, and good, that it condemns transgressors to *death*.

Verse 13. **Was then that which is good made death unto me?]** This is the question of the *Jew*, with whom the apostle appears to be disputing. "Do you allow the law to be *good*, and yet say it is the *cause* of our *death*?" The apostle answers:-*God forbid!* γενοιτο, by no means: it is not the *law* that is the *cause* of your death, but *sin*; it was sin which subjected us to death by the law, justly threatening sin with death: which law was given that sin might appear-might be set forth in its own colours; when we saw it subjected us to death by a law perfectly holy, just, and good; that sin, by the law, might be represented what it really is:-καθ' υπερβολην αμαρτωλος, an EXCEEDING GREAT and *deadly evil*.

Thus it appears that man cannot have a true notion of sin but by means of the law of God. For this I have already given sufficient reasons in the preceding notes. And it was one design of the law to show the abominable and destructive nature of sin, as well as to be a rule of life. It would be almost impossible for a man to have that just notion of the *demerit* of sin so as to produce repentance, or to see the nature and necessity of the death of Christ, if the law were not applied to his conscience by the light of the Holy Spirit; it is *then* alone that he sees himself to be carnal, and sold under sin; and that the law and the commandment are holy, just, and good. And let it be observed, that the law did not answer this end merely among the *Jews* in the *days of the apostle*; it is just as necessary to the *Gentiles* to the *present hour*. Nor do we find that true repentance takes place where the moral law is not preached and enforced. Those who preach only the *Gospel* to sinners, at best only heal the hurt of the daughter of my people *slightly*. The *law*, therefore, is the grand instrument in the hands of a faithful minister, to alarm and awaken sinners; and he may safely show that every sinner is *under* the law, and consequently under the curse, who has not fled for refuge to the hope held out by the Gospel: for, in this sense also, *Jesus Christ is the END of the LAW for justification to them that believe*.

Verse 14. **For, we know that the law is spiritual]** This is a general proposition, and probably, in the apostle's autograph, concluded the above sentence. The law is not to be considered as a system of *external rites* and *ceremonies*; nor even as a *rule of moral action*: it is a *spiritual system*; it reaches to the most hidden purposes, thoughts, dispositions, and desires of the heart and soul; and it reprove and condemns every thing, without hope of reprieve or pardon, that is contrary to eternal truth and rectitude.

**But I am carnal, sold under sin.]** This was probably, in the apostle's letter, the beginning of a new paragraph. I believe it is agreed, on all hands, that the apostle is here demonstrating the

insufficiency of the law in opposition to the Gospel. That by the *former* is the *knowledge*, by the latter the *cure, of sin*. Therefore by I here he cannot mean *himself*, nor any *Christian believer*: if the contrary could be proved, the argument of the apostle would go to demonstrate the insufficiency of the *Gospel* as well as the *law*.

It is difficult to conceive how the opinion could have crept into the Church, or prevailed there, that "the apostle speaks here of his *regenerate state*; and that what was, in such a state, true of himself, must be true of all others in the same state." This opinion has, most pitifully and most shamefully, not only lowered the standard of Christianity, but destroyed its influence and disgraced its character. It requires but little knowledge of the spirit of the Gospel, and of the scope of this epistle, to see that the apostle is, here, either personating a Jew under the law and without the Gospel, or showing what his own state was when he was deeply convinced that by the deeds of the law no man could be justified, and had not as yet heard those blessed words: *Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, #Ac 9:17*.

In this and the following verses he states the contrariety between *himself*, or any Jew while without Christ, and the *law* of God. Of the latter he says, *it is spiritual*; of the former, *I am carnal, sold under sin*. Of the *carnal man*, in opposition to the *spiritual*, never was a more complete or accurate description given. The expressions, *in the flesh*, and *after the flesh*, in **#Ro 7:5**, and in **#Ro 8:5, 8, 9, &c.**, are of the same import with the word *carnal* in this verse. To be *in the flesh*, or to be *carnally minded*, solely respects the *unregenerate*. While *unregenerate*, a man is in a state of death and enmity against God, **#Ro 8:6-9**. This is St. Paul's own account of a *carnal man*. The soul of such a man has no authority over the appetites of the body and the lusts of the flesh: *reason* has not the government of *passion*. The work of such a *person* is *to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, #Ro 13:14. He minds the things of the flesh, #Ro 8:5; he is at enmity with God. In all these things the *spiritual man* is the *reverse*; he lives in a state of *friendship* with God in Christ, and the Spirit of God dwells in him; his soul has dominion over the appetites of the body and the lusts of the flesh; his passions submit to the government of reason, and he, by the Spirit, mortifies the deeds of the flesh; *he mindeth the things of the Spirit, #Ro 8:5*. The Scriptures, therefore, place these two characters in direct opposition to each other. Now the apostle begins this passage by informing us that it is his *carnal state* that he is about to describe, in opposition to the spirituality of God's holy law, saying, *But I am carnal*.*

Those who are of another opinion maintain that by the word *carnal* here the apostle meant that *corruption* which dwelt in him *after his conversion*; but this opinion is founded on a very great mistake; for, although there may be, after justification, the remains of the carnal mind, which will be less or more felt till the soul is completely sanctified, yet the man is never denominated from the *inferior* principle, which is under control, but from the superior principle which habitually prevails. Whatever epithets are given to *corruption* or *sin* in Scripture, opposite epithets are given to *grace* or *holiness*. By these different epithets are the *unregenerate* and *regenerate* denominated. From all this it follows that the epithet *carnal*, which is the characteristic designation of an *unregenerate man*, cannot be applied to St. Paul *after his conversion*; nor, indeed, to any *Christian* in that state.

But the word *carnal*, though used by the apostle to signify a state of death and enmity against God, is not sufficient to denote all the evil of the state which he is describing; hence he adds, *sold under sin*. This is one of the strongest expressions which the Spirit of God uses in Scripture, to describe the full depravity of fallen man. It implies a *willing slavery*: Ahab had *sold himself to work evil*, #1Ki 21:20. And of the Jews it is said, in their utmost depravity, *Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves*, #Isa 50:1. *They forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and WERE SOLD to do mischief*, 1 Macc. i. 15. Now, if the word *carnal*, in its strongest sense, had been sufficiently significant of all he meant, why add to this charge another expression still stronger? We must therefore understand the phrase, *sold under sin*, as implying that the soul was *employed in the drudgery of sin*; that it was *sold over* to this service, and had no power to disobey this tyrant, until it was redeemed by another. And if a man be actually sold to another, and he acquiesce in the deed, then he becomes the *legal property* of that other person. This state of bondage was well known to the Romans. The sale of slaves they saw daily, and could not misunderstand the emphatical sense of this expression. Sin is here represented as a *person*; and the apostle compares the dominion which sin has over the man in question to that of a master over his legal slave. Universally through the Scriptures man is said to be in a state of bondage to sin until the Son of God make him free: but in no part of the sacred writings is it ever said that the *children of God* are *sold under sin*. Christ came to deliver the lawful captive, and take away the prey from the mighty. *Whom the Son maketh free, they are free indeed*. Then, they *yield not up their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; for sin shall not have the dominion over them*, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death, #Ro 6:13, 14; 8:2. Anciently, when regular *cartels* were not known, the captives became the slaves of their victors, and by them were *sold* to any purchaser; their slavery was as complete and perpetual as if the slave had resigned his own liberty, and sold himself: the laws of the land secured him to his master; he could not redeem himself, because he had nothing that was *his own*, and nothing could rescue him from that state but a stipulated *redemption*. The apostle speaks here, not of the *manner* in which the person in question became a slave; he only asserts the fact, that sin had a full and permanent dominion over him.—*Smith*, on the carnal man's character.

**I am carnal, sold under sin.]** I have been the more particular in ascertaining the genuine sense of this verse, because it determines the general scope of the whole passage.

Verse 15. **For, that which I do, I allow not, &c.]** The first clause of this verse is a general assertion concerning the employment of the person in question in the state which the apostle calls *carnal, and sold under sin*. The Greek word *κατεργάζομαι* which is here translated *I do*, means a *work* which the agent *continues to perform* till it is *finished*, and is used by the apostle, #Php 2:12, to denote the *continued employment* of God's saints in his service to the end of their lives. **WORK OUT your own salvation;** the word here denotes an employment of a *different* kind; and therefore the man who now feels the galling dominion of sin says, What I am *continually labouring* at I *allow not*, *οὐ γινώσκω*, *I do not acknowledge* to be right, just, holy, or profitable.

**But what I hate, that do I.]** I am a *slave*, and under the absolute control of my tyrannical master: I hate his service, but am *obliged* to work his will. Who, without blaspheming, can assert that the apostle is speaking this of a man in whom the *Spirit of the Lord dwells*? From #Ro 7:7 to this one the apostle, says Dr. Taylor, denotes the *Jew in the flesh* by a single *I*; here, he divides that *I* into two

*I's*, or figurative persons; representing two different and opposite principles which were in him. The one *I*, or principle, assents to the law that it is good, and wills and chooses what the other does not practise, #Ro 7:16. This principle he expressly tells us, #Ro 7:22, is the *inward man*; the *law of the mind*, #Ro 7:23; the *mind*, or rational faculty, #Ro 7:25; for he could find no other *inward man*, or *law of the mind*, but the rational faculty, in a person who was *carnal* and *sold under sin*. The other *I*, or principle, transgresses the law, #Ro 7:23, and does those things which the former principle *allows not*. This principle he expressly tells us, #Ro 7:18, is the *flesh*, the *law in the members*, or *sensual appetite*, #Ro 7:23; and he concludes in the last verse, that these two principles were opposite to each other; therefore it is evident that those two principles, residing and counteracting each other in the same person; are *reason* and *lust*, or *sin that dwells in us*. And it is very easy to distinguish these two *I's*, or principles, in every part of this elegant description of iniquity, domineering over the light and remonstrances of reason. For instance, #Ro 7:17: *Now then, it is no more I that do it, but SIN that dwelleth in me*. The *I* he speaks of here is opposed to indwelling or governing sin; and therefore plainly denotes the principle of reason, the *inward man*, or *law of the mind*; in which, I add, a measure of the light of the Spirit of God shines, in order to show the sinfulness of sin. These two different principles he calls, one *flesh*, and the other *spirit*, #Ga 5:17; where he speaks of their contrariety in the same manner that he does here.

And we may give a probable reason why the apostle dwells so long upon the struggle and opposition between these two principles; it appears intended to answer a tacit but very obvious objection. The Jew might allege: "But the law is holy and spiritual; and I assent to it as good, as a right rule of action, which ought to be observed; yea, I esteem it highly, I *glory* and *rest* in it, convinced of its truth and excellency. And is not this enough to constitute the law a sufficient principle of sanctification?" The apostle answers, "No; *wickedness* is consistent with a *sense of truth*. A man may assent to the best rule of action, and yet still be under the dominion of lust and sin; from which nothing can deliver him but a principle and power proceeding from the *fountain of life*."

The sentiment in this verse may be illustrated by quotations from the ancient heathens; many of whom felt themselves in precisely the same state, (and expressed it in nearly the same language,) which some most monstrously tell us was the state of this heavenly apostle, when vindicating the claims of the Gospel against those of the Jewish ritual! Thus OVID describes the conduct of a depraved man:—

*Sed trahit invitam nova vis; aliudque cupido,  
Mens aliud suadet. Video meliora, proboque;  
Deteriora sequor.*  
OVID, *Met.* lib. vii. ver. 19.

My *reason* this, my *passion* that persuades;  
I see the *right*, and I approve it too;  
Condemn the *wrong*, and yet the *wrong pursue*.

———*indignum facinus! nunc ego et  
Illam scelestam esse, et me miserum sentio:  
Et tædet: et amore ardeo: et prudens, sciens,  
Vivus, vidensque pereo: nec quid agam scio.*  
TERENT. Eun. ver. 70.

An unworthy act! Now I perceive that she is wicked, and I am wretched. I burn with love, and am vexed at it. Although prudent, and intelligent, and active, and seeing, I perish; neither do I know what to do.

*Sed quia mente minus validus, quam corpore toto,  
Quæ nocuere, sequar; fugiam, quæ profore credam.*  
HOR. Ep. lib. i. E. 8, ver. 7.

More in my mind than body lie my pains:  
Whate'er may *hurt* me, I with *joy* pursue;  
Whate'er may do me *good*, with *horror* view.  
*Francis.*

Επει γαρ ο αμαρτανων ου θελει αμαρτανειν, αλλα κατορθωσαι· δηλον οτι, ο μεν θελει, ου ποιει, και ομη θελει, ποιει.

ARRIAN. *Epist.* ii. 26.

For, truly, he who sins does not will sin, but wishes to walk uprightly: yet it is manifest that what he *wills* he *doth* not; and what he *wills not* he *doth*.

———αλλα νικωμαι κακοις,  
Και μανθανω μεν, οια τολμησω κακα·  
Θυμος δε κρεισσων των εμων βουλευματων,  
‘Οσπερ μεγιστων αιτος κακων βροτοις.  
EURIP. Med. v. 1077.

———But I am overcome by sin,  
And I well understand the evil which I presume to commit.  
*Passion*, however, is more powerful than my *reason*;  
Which is the *cause* of the *greatest evils* to mortal men.

Thus we find that enlightened heathens, both among the Greeks and Romans, had that same kind of religious experience which some suppose to be, not only the experience of St. Paul in his best state, but to be even the standard of Christian attainments! See more examples in *Wetstein*.

The whole spirit of the sentiment is well summed up and expressed by St. *Chrysostom*: *οταν τινος επιθυμωμεν, ειτε κωλυωμεθα, αιρεται μαλλον της επιθυμιας η φλοξ*: If we lust after any thing which is afterwards prohibited, the flame of this desire burns the more *fiercely*.

Verse 16. **If then I do that which I would not, &c.]** Knowing that the law condemns it, and that therefore it must be *evil*. *I consent unto the law*; I show by this circumstance that I acknowledge the law to be good.

Verse 17. **Now then it is no more I]** It is not that *I* which constitutes *reason* and *conscience*, but *sin*-corrupt and sensual inclinations, *that dwelleth in me*-that has the entire domination over my reason, darkening my understanding, and perverting my judgment; for which there is *condemnation* in the law, but no *cure*. So we find here that there is a principle in the unregenerate man stronger than *reason* itself; a principle which is, properly speaking, not of the *essence of the soul*, but acts *in* it, as its *lord*, or as a *tyrant*. This is *inbred* and *indwelling sin*-the *seed of the serpent*; by which the whole soul is darkened, confused, perverted, and excited to rebellion against God.

Verse 18. **For I know that in me, &c.]** I have learned by experience that in an unregenerate man there is *no good*. There is no principle by which the soul can be brought into the light; no principle by which it can be *restored* to purity: fleshly appetites alone prevail; and the *brute* runs away with the *man*.

**For to will is present with me]** Though the whole soul has suffered indescribably by the FALL, yet there are some faculties that appear to have suffered less than others; or rather have received larger measures of the supernatural light, because their concurrence with the Divine principle is so necessary to the salvation of the soul. Even the most unconcerned about spiritual things have *understanding, judgment, reason, and will*. And by means of these we have seen even scoffers at Divine revelation become very eminent in arts and sciences; some of our best metaphysicians, physicians, mathematicians, astronomers, chemists, &c., have been known-to their reproach be it spoken and published-to be *without religion*; nay, some of them have blasphemed it, by leaving God out of his own work, and ascribing to an idol of their own, whom they call *nature*, the operations of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Most High. It is true that many of the most eminent in all the above branches of knowledge have been conscientious believers in Divine revelation; but the case of the others proves that, *fallen* as man is, he yet possesses extra-ordinary powers, which are capable of very high cultivation and improvement. In short, the soul seems capable of *any thing* but *knowing, fearing, loving, and serving God*. And it is not only incapable, *of itself*, for any truly religious acts; but what shows its fall in the most indisputable manner is its *enmity* to sacred things. Let an unregenerate man *pretend* what he pleases, his conscience knows that he *hates religion*; his *soul revolts against it*; his *carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be*. There is no reducing this fell principle to subjection; it is SIN, and *sin* is *rebellion* against God; therefore sin must be *destroyed*, not *subjected*; if *subjected*, it would *cease to be sin*, because *sin* is in *opposition* to God: hence the apostle says, most conclusively, *it cannot be subjected*, i.e. it must be *destroyed*, or it will destroy the soul for ever. When the apostle says, *to will is present with me*, he shows that the *will* is on the side of God and truth, so far that it consents to the *propriety* and *necessity* of obedience. There has been a strange clamour raised up against this faculty of the soul, as if the very essence of evil dwelt in it; whereas the apostle shows, throughout this chapter, that the *will* was regularly on God's side, while every other faculty appears to have been in *hostility* to him. The truth is, men have confounded the *will* with the *passions*, and laid to the charge of the *former* what properly belongs to the *latter*. The *will* is *right*, but the *passions* are *wrong*. It *discerns* and *approves*, but is without *ability* to *perform*: it has no power over sensual appetites; in these the

principle of *rebellion* dwells: it *nills* evil, it *wills* good, but can only *command* through the power of Divine grace: but this the person in question, the unregenerate man, has not received.

Verse 19. **For the good that I would I do not]** Here again is the most decisive proof that the *will* is on the side of God and truth.

**But the evil which I would not]** And here is equally decisive proof that the will is against, or opposed to evil. There is not a man in ten millions, who will carefully watch the operations of this faculty, that will find it opposed to good and obstinately attached to evil, as is generally supposed. Nay, it is found almost uniformly on God's side, while the whole sensual system is against him.-It is not the WILL that leads men astray; but the corrupt PASSIONS which oppose and oppress the *will*. It is truly astonishing into what endless mistakes men have fallen on this point, and what *systems of divinity* have been built on these mistakes. The *will*, this almost only *friend* to God in the human soul, has been slandered as God's *worst enemy*, and even by those who had the *seventh* chapter to the Romans before their eyes! Nay, it has been considered so fell a foe to God and goodness that it is bound in the adamantine chains of a dire necessity to do *evil only*; and the doctrine of *will* (absurdly called *free will*, as if *will* did not essentially imply what is *free*) has been considered one of the most destructive heresies. Let such persons put themselves to school to their *Bibles* and to *common sense*.

The plain state of the case is this: the soul is so completely fallen, that it has no *power* to *do good* till it receive that power from on high. But it has power to *see* good, to *distinguish* between *that* and *evil*; to *acknowledge* the excellence of this good, and to *will* it, from a conviction of that excellence; but *farther* it cannot go. Yet, in various cases, it is solicited and *consents* to sin; and because it is *will*, that is, because it is a *free principle*, it must necessarily possess this power; and although it can do no good unless it receive grace from God, yet it is impossible to *force* it to sin. Even Satan himself cannot do this; and before he can get it to *sin*, he must gain its *consent*. Thus God in his endless mercy has endued this faculty with a power in which, humanly speaking, resides the *salvability* of the soul; and without this the soul must have eternally continued *under the power of sin*, or been saved as an inert, absolutely passive machine; which supposition would go as nearly to prove that it was as incapable of vice as it were of virtue.

"But does not this arguing destroy the doctrine of free grace?" No! it establishes that doctrine. 1. It is through the grace, the unmerited kindness, of God, that the soul has such a faculty, and that it has not been extinguished by sin. 2. This will, though a *free principle*, as it respects its *nilling* of *evil* and *choosing* good, yet, properly speaking, has *no power* by which it can *subjugate* the *evil* or *perform* the *good*. We know that the *eye* has a power to discern objects, but without *light* this power is perfectly useless, and no object can be discerned by it. So, of the person represented here by the apostle, it is said, *To will is present with me*, το γαρ θελει παρακειται μοι. *To will is ever in readiness*, it is *ever at hand*, it *lies constantly before me*; but *how to perform that which is good*, I *find not*; that is, the man is unregenerate, and he is seeking justification and holiness from the *law*. The law was never designed to give these-it gives the *knowledge*, not the *cure of sin*; therefore, though he *nills evil* and *wills good*, yet he can neither *conquer* the *one* nor *perform* the *other* till he receives the grace of Christ, till he seeks and finds redemption in his blood. Here, then, the *free agency* of *man* is *preserved*, without which he could not be in a *salvable state*; and the *honour* of the



*grace of Christ* is maintained, without which there can be no actual salvation. There is a good sentiment on this subject in the following words of an eminent poet:—

Thou great first CAUSE, least understood;  
Who all my sense confined  
To know but this, that *thou art good*;  
And that *myself am blind*.

Yet gave me in this *dark* estate  
To *see* the *good* from *ill*;  
And *binding nature* fast in *fate*,  
Left *free* the human *will*.  
——POPE'S *Universal Prayer*.

Verse 20. **It is no more I]** My *will* is against it; my *reason* and *conscience* condemn it. *But sin that dwelleth in me—the principle of sin*, which has possessed itself of all my *carnal appetites* and *passions*, and thus subjects my *reason* and domineers over my *soul*. Thus I am in perpetual contradiction to myself. Two principles are continually contending in me for the mastery: my *reason*, on which the light of God shines, to show what is evil; and my *passions*, in which the *principle of sin* works, to bring forth fruit unto death.

This strange self-contradictory propensity led some of the ancient philosophers to imagine that man has *two souls*, a *good* and a *bad* one; and it is on this principle that *Xenophon*, in his *life of Cyrus*, causes *Araspes*, a Persian nobleman, to account for some misconduct of his relative to *Panthea*, a beautiful female captive, whom *Cyrus* had entrusted to his care:—"O *Cyrus*, I am convinced that I have *two souls*; if I had but *one soul*, it could not at the same time pant after *vice* and *virtue*; wish and *abhor* the *same thing*. It is certain, therefore, that we have *two souls*; when the *good soul* rules, I undertake noble and virtuous actions; but when the *bad soul* predominates, I am constrained to do evil. All I can say at present is that I find my *good soul*, encouraged by thy presence, has got the better of my *bad soul*." See *Spectator*, vol. viii. No. 564. Thus, not only the *ancients*, but also many *moderns*, have trifled, and all will continue to do so who do not acknowledge the Scriptural account of the *fall of man*, and the lively comment upon that doctrine contained in the *seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans*.

Verse 21. **I find then a law]** I am in such a condition and state of soul, under the power of such habits and sinful propensities, *that when I would do good*—when my *will* and *reason* are strongly bent on obedience to the law of God and opposition to the principle of sin, *evil is present with me*, *κακὸν παρὰκεῖται*, *evil is at hand, it lies constantly before me*. That, as the *will* to do good is *constantly at hand*, **#Ro 7:18**, so the principle of *rebellion* exciting me to sin is *equally present*; but, as the one is only *will*, *wish*, and *desire*, without *power* to *do* what is *willed*, to *obtain* what is *wished*, or to *perform* what is *desired*, sin continually prevails.

The word *νόμος*, *law*, in this verse, must be taken as implying any *strong* or *confirmed habit*, *συνήθεια*, as *Hesychius* renders it, under the influence of which the man *generally acts*; and in this sense the apostle most evidently uses it in **#Ro 7:23**.

Verse 22. **I delight in the law of God after the inward man]** Every *Jew*, and every *unregenerate man*, who receives the Old Testament as a revelation from God, must acknowledge the great purity, excellence and utility of its *maxims*, &c., though he will ever find that without the *grace of our Lord Jesus* he can never *act* according to those heavenly maxims; and without the *mercy* of God, can never be redeemed from the *curse* entailed upon him for his past transgressions. To say that the *inward man* means the *regenerate part* of the soul, is supportable by no argument. *ὁ εἰς ἄνθρωπος*, and *ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος*, especially the *latter*, are expressions frequently in use among the purest Greek ethic writers, to signify the *soul* or *rational* part of man, in opposition to the *body of flesh*. See the quotations in Wetstein from *Plato* and *Plotinus*. The Jews have the same form of expression; so in *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 10, 3, it is said: *The flesh is the inward garment of the man; but the SPIRIT is the INWARD man, the garment of which is the body*; and St. Paul uses the phrase in precisely the *same sense* in **#2Co 4:16**, and **#Eph 3:16**. If it be said that it is impossible for an unregenerate man *to delight in the law of God*, the experience of millions contradicts the assertion. Every true *penitent* admires the moral law, longs most earnestly for a conformity to it, and feels that he can never be satisfied till he awakes up after this Divine likeness; and he hates himself, because he feels that he has *broken* it, and that his evil passions are still in a state of *hostility* to it.

The following observations of a pious and sensible writer on this subject cannot be unacceptable: "The *inward man* always signifies the *mind*; which either may, or may not, be the subject of grace. That which is asserted of either the *inward* or *outward man* is often performed by *one member* or *power*, and not with the *whole*. If any member of the body perform an *action*, we are said to do it with the *body*, although the other members be not employed. In like manner, if any *power* or *faculty* of the mind be employed about any action, the *soul* is said to act. This expression, therefore, *I delight in the law of God after the inward man*, can mean no more than this, that there are some *inward faculties* in the soul which delight in the law of God. This expression is particularly adapted to the principles of the *Pharisees*, of whom St. Paul was one before his conversion. They received the law as the oracles of God, and confessed that it deserved the most serious regard. Their veneration was inspired by a sense of its original, and a full conviction that it was true. To some parts of it they paid the most superstitious regard. They had it written upon their *phylacteries*, which they carried about with them at all times. It was often read and expounded in their synagogues: and they took delight in studying its precepts. On that account, both the prophets and our Lord agree in saying that *they delighted in the law of God*, though they regarded not its chief and most essential precepts." See farther observations on this point at the end of the chapter.

So far, then, is it from being true that *none but a REGENERATE man can delight in the law of God*, we find that even a *proud, unhumbléd PHARISEE* can do it; and much more a *poor sinner*, who is humbled under a sense of his sin, and sees, in the light of God, not only the *spirituality*, but the *excellence* of the Divine law.

Verse 23. **But I see another law in my members]** Though the person in question is less or more under the continual influence of *reason* and *conscience*, which offer constant testimony against sin, yet as long as help is sought only from the *law*, and the grace of Christ in the Gospel is not received, the remonstrances of reason and conscience are rendered of no effect by the prevalence of sinful passions; which, from repeated gratifications, have acquired all the force of *habit*, and now *give law* to the whole carnal man.

**Warring against the law of my mind]** There is an allusion here to the case of a *city besieged*, at last *taken by storm*, and the inhabitants carried away into captivity; *αντιστρατευομενον*, carrying on a *system of warfare*; laying *continual siege* to the soul; *repeating incessantly* its attacks; *harassing, battering, and storming* the spirit; and, by all these *assaults*, reducing the man to *extreme misery*. Never was a picture more impressively drawn and more effectually finished; for the next sentence shows that this spiritual city was at last taken by storm, and the inhabitants who survived the sackage led into the most shameful, painful, and oppressive captivity.

**Bringing me into captivity to the law of sin]** He does not here speak of an *occasional advantage* gained by sin, it was a *complete* and final victory gained by corruption; which, having stormed and reduced the city, carried away the inhabitants with irresistible force, into captivity. This is the consequence of being overcome; he was now in the hands of the foe as the victor's lawful captive; and this is the import of the original word, *αιχμαλωτιζοντα*, and is the very term used by our Lord when speaking of the final ruin, dispersion, and captivity of the Jews. He says, *αιχμαλωτισθησονται*, *they shall be led away captives* into all the nations, **#Lu 21:24**. When all this is considered, who, in his right mind, can apply it to the holy soul of the apostle of the Gentiles? Is there any thing in it that can belong to his *gracious* state? Surely nothing. The *basest slave of sin*, who has any remaining checks of conscience, cannot be brought into a *worse* state than that described here by the apostle. Sin and corruption have a *final triumph*; and *conscience* and *reason* are taken *prisoners, laid in fetters, and sold for slaves*. Can this ever be said of a man in whom the Spirit of God dwells, and whom *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made free from the law of sin and death*? See **#Ro 8:2**.

Verse 24. **O wretched man that I am, &c.]** This affecting account is finished more impressively by the *groans* of the *wounded* captive. Having long maintained a useless conflict against innumerable hosts and irresistible might, he is at last *wounded* and taken prisoner; and to render his state more miserable, is not only encompassed by the slaughtered, but *chained to a dead body*; for there seems to be here an allusion to an ancient custom of certain tyrants, who bound a *dead body* to a *living man*, and obliged him to carry it about, till the contagion from the putrid mass took away his life! *Virgil* paints this in all its horrors, in the account he gives of the tyrant Mezentius. *Æneid*, lib. viii. ver. 485.

*Quid memorem infandas cædes? quid facta tyranni?*

MORTUA quin etiam jungebat corpora VIVIS,  
Componens manibusque manus, atque oribus ora;  
Tormenti genus! et sanie taboque fluentes  
Complexu in misero, longa sic morte necabat.

What tongue can such barbarities record,  
 Or count the slaughters of his ruthless sword?  
 'Twas not enough the good, the guiltless bled,  
 Still worse, he *bound the living to the dead*:  
 These, *limb to limb*, and *face to face*, he joined;  
 O! monstrous crime, of unexampled kind!  
 Till *choked with stench*, the *lingering wretches* lay,  
 And, in the *loathed embraces*, died away!  
*Pitt.*

*Servius* remarks, in his comment on this passage, that *sanies*, mortui est; *tabo*, viventis scilicet sanguis: "the *sanies*, or putrid *ichor*, from the dead body, produced the *tabes* in the blood of the living." Roasting, burning, racking, crucifying, &c., were nothing when compared to this diabolically invented punishment.

We may naturally suppose that the cry of such a person would be, *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this dead body?* And how well does this apply to the case of the person to whom the apostle refers! A *body*-a whole *mass of sin and corruption*, was *bound to his soul* with *chains* which he could not break; and the mortal *contagion*, transfused through his whole nature, was pressing him down to the bitter pains of an eternal death. He now finds that the *law* can afford him no deliverance; and he despairs of help from any *human being*; but while he is emitting his *last*, or *almost expiring groan*, the *redemption* by Christ Jesus is proclaimed to him; and, if the apostle refers to his *own case*, Ananias unexpectedly accosts him with-*Brother Saul! the Lord Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me unto thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost*. He sees then an open door of hope, and he immediately, though but in the *prospect* of this deliverance, returns God thanks for the well-grounded *hope* which he has of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 25. **I thank God through Jesus Christ]** Instead of *ευχαριστω τω θεω*, *I thank God*, several excellent MSS., with the *Vulgate*, some copies of the *Itala*, and several of the *fathers*, read *η χαρις του θεου*, or *του κυριου*, *the grace of God*, or *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*; this is an *answer* to the almost despairing question in the preceding verse. The whole, therefore, may be read thus: *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* ANSWER-*The grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Thus we find that a case of the kind described by the apostle in the preceding verses, whether it were *his own*, before he was brought to the knowledge of Christ, particularly during the three days that he was at Damascus, without being able to eat or drink, in deep penitential sorrow; or whether he personates a *pharisaic yet conscientious Jew*, deeply concerned for his salvation: I say, we find that such a case can be relieved by the Gospel of Christ only; or, in other words, that no scheme of redemption can be effectual to the salvation of any soul, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, but that laid down in the Gospel of Christ.

Let any or all means be used which human wisdom can devise, *guilt* will still continue *uncancelled*; and *inbred sin* will laugh them all to scorn, prevail over them, and finally triumph. And

this is the very conclusion to which the apostle brings his argument in the following clause; which, like the rest of the chapter, has been most awfully abused, to favour *anti-evangelical* purposes.

**So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God]** That this clause contains the *inference* from the preceding train of argumentation appears evident, from the *απα ουν, therefore*, with which the apostle introduces it. As if he had said: "To conclude, the sum of what I have advanced, concerning the *power of sin* in the *carnal man*, and the utter *insufficiency* of all *human means* and *legal observances* to pardon sin and expel the corruption of the heart, is this: that the very same person, the *αυτος εγω, the same I*, while without the Gospel, under the killing power of the law, will find in himself *two opposite principles*, the one subscribing to and approving the law of God; and the other, notwithstanding, bringing him *into captivity* to sin: his *inward man*-his *rational powers* and *conscience*, will assent to the *justice* and *propriety* of the requisitions of the law; and yet, notwithstanding this, his *fleshly appetites*-the *law in his members*, will *war against the law of his mind*, and continue, till he receives the Gospel of Christ, to keep him in the galling captivity of sin and death."

1. THE strong expressions in this clause have led many to conclude that the *apostle* himself, in his *regenerated state*, is indisputably *the person* intended. That all that is said in this chapter of the *carnal man*, *sold under sin*, did apply to *Saul of Tarsus*, no man can doubt: that what is here said can ever be with propriety applied to *Paul the Apostle*, who can believe? Of the former, all is natural; of the latter, all here said would be monstrous and absurd, if not blasphemous.

2. But it is supposed that the words must be understood as implying a *regenerate man*, because the apostle says, **#Ro 7:22**, *I delight in the law of God*; and in this verse, *I myself with the mind serve the law of God*. These things, say the objectors, cannot be spoken of a wicked Jew, but of a *regenerate* man such as the apostle then was. But when we find that the former verse speaks of a man who is *brought into captivity to the law of sin and death*, surely there is no part of the regenerate state of the apostle to which the words can possibly apply. Had he been in captivity to the law of sin and death, *after* his conversion to Christianity, what did he gain by that conversion? *Nothing* for his personal holiness. He had found no salvation under an inefficient law; and he was left in thralldom under an equally inefficient Gospel. The very genius of Christianity demonstrates that nothing like this can, with any propriety, be spoken of a *genuine Christian*.

3. But it is farther supposed that these things cannot be spoken of a proud or wicked Jew; yet we learn the contrary from the infallible testimony of the word of God. Of this people in their *fallen* and iniquitous state, God says, by his prophet, *They SEEK me DAILY, and DELIGHT to know my ways, as a nation that did RIGHTEOUSNESS, and FORSOOK not the ORDINANCES of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of JUSTICE, and TAKE DELIGHT in approaching to God, #Isa 58:2*. Can any thing be *stronger* than this? And yet, at that time, they were *most dreadfully carnal*, and *sold under sin*, as the rest of that chapter proves. It is a most notorious fact, that how little soever the life of a Jew was conformed to the law of his God, he notwithstanding professed the highest *esteem* for it, and *gloried* in it: and the apostle says nothing stronger of them in this chapter than their *conduct* and *profession* verify to the *present day*. They are still *delighting in the law of God*, after the *inward man*; with *their mind serving the law of God*; *asking for the ordinances of justice, seeking God daily, and taking delight in approaching to God*; they even *glory*, and greatly *exult and glory*, in the Divine

*original and excellency of their LAW; and all this while they are most abominably carnal, sold under sin, and brought into the most degrading captivity to the law of sin and death.* If then all that the apostle states of the person in question be true of the *Jews*, through the whole period of their history, even to the *present time*; if they do in all their *professions* and their *religious services*, which they zealously maintain, confess, and conscientiously too, that the *law is holy*, and the *commandment holy, just, and good*; and yet, with their *flesh, serve the law of sin*; the same certainly may be said with equal propriety of a *Jewish penitent*, deeply convinced of his lost estate, and the total insufficiency of his legal observances to deliver him from his *body of sin and death*. And consequently, all this may be said of *Paul the JEW*, while *going about to establish his own righteousness*-his own plan of justification; he had not as yet *submitted to the righteousness of God*-the Divine plan of redemption by Jesus Christ.

4. It must be allowed that, whatever was the *experience* of so eminent a man, Christian, and apostle, as St. Paul, it must be a very proper *standard of Christianity*. And if we are to take what is here said as *his experience* as a *Christian*, it would be presumption in *us* to expect to go higher; for he certainly had pushed the principles of his religion to their utmost consequences. But his whole life, and the account which he immediately gives of himself in the succeeding chapter, prove that he, as a *Christian* and an *apostle*, had a *widely different experience*; an experience which amply justifies that *superiority* which he attributes to the *Christian* religion over the *Jewish*; and demonstrates that it not only is well calculated to *perfect* all preceding dispensations, but that it affords *salvation to the uttermost* to all those who flee for refuge to the hope that it sets before them. Besides, there is nothing spoken here of the state of a *conscientious Jew*, or of St. Paul in his *Jewish state*, that is not true of every genuine *penitent*; even *before*, and it may be, *long before*, he has believed in Christ to the saving of his soul. The assertion that "every Christian, howsoever advanced in the Divine life, will and must feel all this inward conflict," &c., is as *untrue* as it is *dangerous*. That many, called *Christians*, and probably *sincere*, do feel all this, may be readily granted; and such we must consider to be in the same state with *Saul of Tarsus*, previously to his conversion; but that they must *continue* thus is no where intimated in the Gospel of Christ. We must take heed how we make *our experience*, which is the result of our *unbelief* and *unfaithfulness*, the *standard* for the people of God, and lower down *Christianity* to our most reprehensible and *dwarfish* state: at the same time, we should not be *discouraged* at what we thus feel, but apply to God, through Christ, as Paul did; and then we shall soon be able, with him, to declare, to the eternal glory of *God's grace*, that *the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, has made us free from the law of sin and death*. This is the inheritance of God's children; and their salvation is of me, saith the Lord.

I cannot conclude these observations without recommending to the notice of my readers a learned and excellent discourse on the latter part of this chapter, preached by the Rev. *James Smith*, minister of the Gospel in *Dumfermline*, Scotland; a work to which I am indebted for some useful observations, and from which I should have been glad to have copied much, had my limits permitted. Reader, do not plead for Baal; try, fully try, the efficiency of the blood of the covenant; and be not content with less salvation than God has provided for thee. Thou art not straitened in God, be not straitened in thy own bowels.



## ROMANS

### CHAPTER VIII.

*The happy state of those who believe in Christ, and walk under the influence of his Spirit, 1, 2. The design of God in sending his Son into the world was to redeem men from sin, 3, 4. The miserable state of the carnally minded, 6-8. How Christ lives and works in his followers; their blessedness here, and their happiness hereafter, 9-17. Sufferings are the common lot of all men; and from which Gentiles and Jews have the hope of being finally delivered, 18-23. The use and importance of hope, 24, 25. The Spirit makes intercession for the followers of Christ, 26, 27. All things work together for good to them that love God, and who act according to his gracious purpose in calling them, 28. The means used to bring men to eternal glory, 29, 30. The great blessedness, confidence, and security of all genuine Christians, whom, while they hold fast faith and a good conscience, nothing can separate from the love of God, 31-39.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VIII.

Verse 1. **There is, therefore, now no condemnation]** To do justice to St. Paul's reasoning, this chapter must be read in the closest connection with the preceding. There we have seen the unavailing struggles of an awakened Jew, who sought pardon and holiness from that law which he was conscious he had broken; and in which he could find no provision for pardon, and no power to sanctify. This conviction having brought him to the very brink of despair, and, being on the point of giving up all hope, he hears of redemption by Jesus Christ, thanks God for the prospect he has of salvation, applies for and receives it; and now magnifies God for the unspeakable gift of which he has been made a partaker.

Those who restrain the word *now*, so as to indicate by it the *Gospel dispensation* only, do not take in the whole of the apostles meaning. The apostle has not been dealing in general matters only, but also in those which are particular. He has not been pointing out merely the difference between the two dispensations, the Mosaic and the Christian; but he marks out the state of a penitent under the former, and that of a believer under the latter. The last chapter closed with an account of the deep distress of the penitent; this one opens with an account of his *salvation*. The *now*, therefore, in the text, must refer more to the happy transition from darkness to light, from condemnation to pardon, which this believer now enjoys, than to the Christian dispensation taking the place of the Jewish economy.

**Who walk not after the flesh, &c.]** In this one verse we find the power and virtue of the Gospel scheme; it *pardons* and *sanctifies*; the Jewish law could do neither. By faith in our Lord Jesus Christ the penitent, condemned by the law, is pardoned; the *carnal man*, labouring under the overpowering influence of the sin of his nature, is sanctified. He is first freely justified; he feels no condemnation; he is fully sanctified; *he walks not after the FLESH, but after the SPIRIT*.

This last clause is wanting in the principal MSS., *versions*, and *fathers*. Griesbach has excluded it from the text; and Dr. *White* says, *Certissime delenda*; it should most undoubtedly be expunged. Without it, the passage reads thus: *There is, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ*



*Jesus; for the law of the Spirit of life, &c.* It is a fairly assumed point, that those who are in *Christ Jesus*, who believe in his name, have redemption in his blood; are made partakers of his Spirit, and have the mind in them that was in him; will not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit: therefore the thing itself is included in the *being in Christ*, whether it be *expressed* or not: and it was probably to make the thing more obvious, that this explanatory clause was added by some copyist, for it does not appear to have made an original part of the text; and it is most likely that it was inserted here from the *fourth* verse.

**Verse 2. For the law of the Spirit of life]** The Gospel of the grace of Christ, which is not only a law or rule of life, but affords that sovereign *energy* by which guilt is removed from the conscience, the power of sin broken, and its polluting influence removed from the heart. The law was a *spirit of death*, by which those who were under it were bound down, because of their sin, to condemnation and death. The Gospel proclaims Jesus the Saviour; and what the *law* bound unto death, IT looses unto life eternal. And thus the apostle says, whether of *himself* or the man whom he is still personating, *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death*. Most people allow that St. Paul is here speaking of his *own state*; and this state is so totally different from that described in the preceding chapter, that it is absolutely impossible that they should have been the state of the same being, at *one* and the *same time*. No creature could possibly be *carnal, sold under sin, brought into captivity to the law of sin and death*; and at the same time be *made free from that law of sin and death, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus!* Until the most palpable absurdities and contradictions can be reconciled, these two opposite states can never exist in the same person at the same time.

**Verse 3. For what the law could not do]** The law could not pardon; the law could not sanctify; the law could not dispense with its own requisitions; it is the rule of righteousness, and therefore must condemn unrighteousness. This is its unalterable nature. Had there been perfect obedience to its dictates, instead of *condemning*, it would have *applauded* and *rewarded*; but as the *flesh*, the *carnal* and *rebellious principle*, had prevailed, and transgression had taken place, it was rendered *weak*, inefficient to undo this word of the *flesh*, and bring the sinner into a state of pardon and acceptance with God.

**God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh]** Did that which the law could not do; i.e. purchased pardon for the sinner, and brought every believer into the favour of God. And this is effected by the incarnation of Christ: He, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, took upon him the *likeness of sinful flesh*, that is, a *human body* like ours, but not *sinful* as ours; and for sin, *καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, and as a SACRIFICE FOR SIN, (this is the sense of the word in a multitude of places,) *condemned sin in the flesh*-condemned that to death and destruction which had condemned us to both.

**Condemned sin in the flesh]** The design and object of the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ was to condemn sin, to have it *executed* and *destroyed*; not to *tolerate* it as some think, or to render it *subservient* to the purposes of his *grace*, as others; but to annihilate its *power, guilt, and being* in the soul of a believer.

Verse 4. **That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us]** That the guilt might be pardoned through the merit of that sacrifice; and that we might be enabled, by the power of his own grace and Spirit, to walk in newness of life; loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves: and thus the righteousness, the spirit, design, and purpose of the law is fulfilled in us, through the *strength of the Spirit of Christ*, which is here put in opposition to *the weakness of the law through the flesh*.

It is very likely that the concluding clause of this verse, which is the very same as that found in the common text of the first verse, has been transferred to that verse from this place.

Verse 5. **For they that are after the flesh]** And here is the great distinction between *Jews* and *genuine Christians*: the former are *after the flesh*-are under the power of the carnal, rebellious principle; and consequently *mind*, *προνουσιν*, *relish, the things of the flesh*-the things which appertain merely to the *present life*; having no relish for *spiritual* and *eternal things*.

**But they that are after the Spirit]** They who are regenerated, who are born of the Spirit, being redeemed from the influence and law of the carnal mind; these relish *the things of the Spirit*-they are spiritually minded, and pass through things *temporal*, so as not to lose the things which are *eternal*. And this, which in these apostolic times distinguished between the carnal Jew and the spiritual believer in Christ, is the grand mark of distinction between the *nominal* and the *real* Christian now. The former is earthly minded, and lives for *this world*; the latter is spiritually minded, and lives for *the world to come*.

Verse 6. **For to be carnally minded is death]** To live under the influence of the carnal mind is to live in the state of condemnation, and consequently liable to death eternal: whereas, on the contrary, he who is *spiritually minded* has the *life* and *peace* of God in his soul, and is in full prospect of life eternal.

Verse 7. **Because the carnal mind is enmity against God]** Because it is a *carnal mind*, and relishes earthly and sinful things, and lives in opposition to the pure and holy law of God: therefore, it is *enmity against God*; it is irreconcilable and implacable hatred.

**It is not subject to the law of God]** It will come under no obedience; for it is *sin*, and the very principle of rebellion; and therefore it cannot be *subject*, nor *subjected*; for it is essential to sin to show itself in *rebellion*; and when it ceases to *rebel*, it ceases to be sin.

From this we learn that the design of God in the economy of the Gospel, is not to *weaken, curtail, or lay* the carnal principle *in bonds*, but to *destroy it*. As it is *not subject*, and cannot be subject, to the law of God, it must be *destroyed*, else it will continue to rebel against God. It cannot be *mended*, or rendered less offensive in its nature, even by the operations of God; it is ever sin, and sin is ever enmity; and enmity, wherever it has power, will invariably show itself in acts of hostility and rebellion.

Verse 8. **So then]** Because this carnal mind is enmity against God, *they that are in the flesh*-who are under the power of the workings of this carnal mind, (which every soul is that has not received redemption in the blood of the Lamb,)—

**Cannot please God.]** Because of the rebellious workings of this principle of *rebellion* and *hatred*. And, if they cannot *please* God, they must be *displeasing* to him; and consequently in the broad road to final perdition.

Verse 9. **But ye are not in the flesh]** Ye Christians, who have believed in Christ Jesus as the sin offering which has condemned sin in the flesh; and, having been justified by faith and made partakers of the Holy Spirit, are enabled to walk in newness of life.

**If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.]** Or *seeing that*, *επει*, the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. The *flesh*, the *sinful principle*, dwelt in them before; and its motions were the proofs of its indwelling; but now the Spirit dwells in them; and its testimony in their conscience, and its powerful operations in their hearts, are the proofs of its indwelling. God made man in union with himself, and his heart was his temple. Sin being committed, the temple was defiled, and God abandoned it. Jesus Christ is come by his sacrifice and Spirit to cleanse the temple, and make man again a habitation of God through the Spirit. And when this almighty Spirit again makes the heart his residence, then the soul is delivered from the moral effects of the fall. And that this is absolutely necessary to our present peace and final salvation is proved from this: that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ-the mind that was in *him*, produced there by the power of the Holy Ghost-*he is none of his*; he does not belong to the kingdom, flock, or family of God. This is an awful conclusion! Reader, lay it to heart.

Verse 10. **And if Christ be in you, &c.]** This is the criterion by which you may judge of the state of grace in which ye stand. If Christ dwell in your hearts by faith, *the body is dead because of sin*, *δι' αμαρτιαν*, in reference to sin; the members of your body no more perform the work of sin than the body of a dead man does the functions of natural life. Or the apostle may mean, that although, *because of sin*, the *life* of man is forfeited; and the sentence, *dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*, must be fulfilled on every human being, until the judgment of the great day; yet, their souls being quickened by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, which enables them to live a life of righteousness, they receive a full assurance that their bodies, which are now condemned to death because of sin, shall be raised again to a life of immortal glory.

Verse 11. **But if the Spirit, &c.]** This verse confirms the sense given to the preceding. He who here receives the grace and Spirit of Christ, and continues to live under its influence a life of obedience to the Divine will, shall have a resurrection to eternal life; and the resurrection of Christ shall be the *pattern* after which they shall be raised.

**By his Spirit that dwelleth in you.]** Instead of *δια του ενωικουντος αυτου πνευματος*, *because of the Spirit of him who dwelleth in you*, DEFG, a great many others, with the *Vulgate*, *Itala*, and several of the fathers, have *δια το ενωικουν αυτου πνευμα*, which gives almost no variety of meaning. The latter may be neater Greek, but it is not better sense than the preceding.

Verse 12. **Therefore, brethren, &c.]** Dr. Taylor is of opinion that the apostle having spoken *separately*, both to Jews and Gentiles, concerning holiness and the obligations to it, now addresses himself to *both* conjointly, and,

I. Draws the general conclusion from *all* his arguments upon this subject, **#Ro 8:12.**

II. Proves the validity of their claims to eternal life, **#Ro 8:14-17.**

III. And as the affair of *suffering persecution* was a great stumbling block to the *Jews*, and might very much discourage the *Gentiles*, he introduces it to the best advantage, **#Ro 8:17**, and advances several arguments to fortify their minds under all trials: as-(1.) That they suffered with *Christ*; (2.) In order to be *glorified* with him in a manner which will infinitely compensate all sufferings, **#Ro 8:17, 18.** (3.) All mankind are under *various pressures*, longing for a better state, **#Ro 8:19-22.** (4.) Many of the most *eminent Christians* are in the same distressed condition, **#Ro 8:23.** (5.) According to the plan of the Gospel, we are to be brought to glory after a course of patience exercised in a variety of trials, **#Ro 8:24, 25.** (6.) The Spirit of God will supply patience to every upright soul under persecution and suffering, **#Ro 8:26, 27.** (7.) All things, even the severest trials, shall work together for their good, **#Ro 8:28.** And this he proves, by giving us a view of the several steps which the wisdom and goodness of God have settled, in order to our complete salvation, **#Ro 8:29, 30.** Thence he passes to the affair of our *perseverance*; concerning which he concludes, from the *whole* of his preceding arguments, that as we are brought into a state of *pardon* by the free grace of God, through the death of Christ, who is now our mediator in heaven; no possible cause, providing we continue to love and serve God, shall be able to pervert our minds, or separate us from his love in Christ Jesus, **#Ro 8:31-39.** *Therefore, ἀρα ουν* is the grand inference from all that he has been arguing in relation to sanctity of life, both to the *Gentiles*, chap. 6, and to the *Jews*, chap. 7, and 8, to this verse, where I suppose he begins to address himself to *both*, in a body, to the end of the chapter.-Taylor, page 317.

Verse 13. **For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die]** Though *μελλετε αποθνησκειν* may mean, *ye shall afterwards die*, and this seems to indicate a *temporal* death, yet not exclusively of an eternal death; for *both*, and especially the latter, are necessarily implied.

**But if ye through the Spirit]** If ye seek that grace and spiritual help which the Gospel of Christ furnishes, resist, and, by resisting, *mortify the deeds of the flesh*, against which the law gave you no assistance, *ye shall live* a life of *faith, love, and holy obedience* here, and a life of *glory* hereafter.

Verse 14. **For as many as are led by the Spirit, &c.]** No man who has not Divine assistance can either find the way to heaven, or walk in it when found. As Christ, by his sacrificial offering, has opened the kingdom of God to all believers; and, as a mediator, transacts the concerns of their kingdom before the throne; so the Spirit of God is the great agent here below, to enlighten, quicken, strengthen, and guide the true disciples of Christ; and all that are born of this Spirit are led and guided by it; and none can pretend to be the children of God who are not thus guided.

Verse 15. **Ye have not received the spirit of bondage]** All that were under the law were under bondage to its rites and ceremonies; and as, through the prevalence of that corrupt nature with which

every human being is polluted, and to remove which the law gave no assistance, they were often *transgressing*, consequently they had forfeited their lives, and were continually, through *fear of death, subject to bondage*, #**Heb 2:15**. The believers in Christ Jesus were brought from under *that* law, and from under its condemnation; and, consequently, were freed from its bondage. The Gentiles were also in a state of bondage as well as the Jews, they had also a multitude of burdensome rites and ceremonies, and a multitude of deities to worship; nor could they believe themselves secure of protection while one of their almost endless host of gods, celestial, terrestrial, or infernal, was left unpropitiated.

**But ye have received the Spirit of adoption]** Ye are brought into the family of God by adoption; and the agent that brought you into this family is the Holy Spirit; and this very Spirit continues to witness to you the grace in which ye stand, by enabling you to call God your Father, with the utmost filial confidence and affection.

**The Spirit of adoption]** Adoption was an act frequent among the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans; by which a person was taken out of one family and incorporated with another. Persons of property, who had no children of their own, adopted those of another family. The child thus adopted ceased to belong to his own family, and was in every respect bound to the person who had adopted him, as if he were his own child; and in consequence of the death of his adopting father he possessed his estates. If a person *after* he had adopted a child happened to have children of his own, then the estate was equally divided between the adopted and real children. The Romans had regular forms of law, by which all these matters were settled.-See in Aulus Gellius. *Noctes Attic.*, vol. i. cap. xix. p. 331. Edit Beloe; and the note there.

**Whereby we cry, Abba, Father.]** The reason why the Syriac and Greek words are here conjoined, may be seen in the note on #**Mr 14:36**, to which the reader is referred. The introduction of the words here shows that the persons in question had the strongest evidence of the excellence of the state in which they stood; they knew that they were thus adopted; and they knew this by the Spirit of God which was given them on their adoption; and let me say, they could know it by no other means. The Father who had adopted them could be seen by no mortal eye; and the transaction being purely of a spiritual nature, and transacted in heaven, can be known only by God's supernatural testimony of it upon earth. It is a matter of such solemn importance to every Christian soul, that God in his mercy has been pleased not to leave it to *conjecture, assumption, or inductive reasoning*; but attests it by his own Spirit in the soul of the person whom he adopts through Christ Jesus. It is the grand and most observable case in which the intercourse is kept up between heaven and earth; and the genuine believer in Christ Jesus is not left to the *quibbles* or casuistry of polemic divines or critics, but receives the *thing*, and the *testimony* of it, immediately from God himself. And were not the testimony of the state thus given, no man could possibly have any assurance of his salvation which would beget confidence and love. If to any man his *acceptance with God* be *hypothetical*, then his *confidence* must be so too. His love to God must be hypothetical, his gratitude hypothetical, and his obedience also. IF God had forgiven me my sins, then I *should* love him, and I *should* be grateful, and I *should* testify this gratitude by *obedience*. But who does not see that these must necessarily depend on the IF in the first case. All this *uncertainty*, and the perplexities necessarily resulting from it, God has precluded by sending the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, by which we cry, Abba, Father: and thus our adoption into the heavenly family is testified and ascertained to us

in the only way in which it can possibly be done, by the direct influence of the Spirit of God. Remove this from Christianity, and it is a *dead letter*.

It has been remarked that *slaves* were not permitted to use the term *Abba*, father, or *Imma*, mother, in accosting their *masters* and *mistresses*. The Hebrew canon, relative to this, is extant in the tract Berachoth, fol. 16. 2, **העבדים והשפחות אין קורין אותם לא אבא פלוגי ולא אימא פלוגיה** *haabadim vehashshephachoth ein korin otham, lo Abba N, velo Imma N. Men-servants and maid-servants do not call to their master Abba, (father,) N. nor to their mistress Imma, (mother,) N.* And from this some suppose that the apostle intimates that being now brought from under the spirit of bondage, in which they durst not call God their *Father*, they are not only brought into a new state, but have got that language which is peculiar to that state. It is certain that no man who has not redemption in the blood of the cross has any right to call God *Father*, but merely as he may be considered the *Father of the spirits of all flesh*.

Some have supposed that the apostle, by using the *Syriac* and *Greek* words which express *Father*, shows the union of *Jewish* and *Gentile* believers in those devotions which were dictated by a filial spirit. Others have thought that these were the *first words* which those generally uttered who were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. It is enough to know that it was the *language* of their *sonship*, and that it expressed the clear assurance they had of being received into the Divine favour, the affection and gratitude they felt for this extraordinary blessing, and their complete readiness to come under the laws and regulations of the family, and to live in the spirit of obedience.

Verse 16. **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit]** **αὐτο το πνευμα**, that same Spirit, the Spirit of adoption; that is, the Spirit who witnesses this adoption; which can be no other than the Holy Ghost himself, and certainly cannot mean any *disposition* or *affection* of mind which the adopted person may feel; for such a disposition must arise from a knowledge of this adoption, and the knowledge of this adoption cannot be given by any human or earthly means; it must come from God himself: therefore the **αὐτο το πνευμα** must have reference to that Spirit, by whom alone the knowledge of the adoption is witnessed to the soul of the believer.

**With our spirit]** In our *understanding*, the place or recipient of light and information; and the place or faculty to which such information can properly be brought. This is done that we may have the highest possible evidence of the work which God has wrought. As the *window* is the proper *medium* to let the light of the sun into our apartments, so the *understanding* is the proper medium of conveying the *Spirit's influence* to the soul. We, therefore, have the utmost evidence of the fact of our adoption which we can possibly have; we have the word and Spirit of God; and the word sealed on our spirit by the Spirit of God. And this is not a momentary influx: if we take care to walk with God, and not grieve the Holy Spirit, we shall have an abiding testimony; and while we continue faithful to our adopting Father, the Spirit that witnesses that adoption will continue to witness it; and hereby we shall know that we are of God by the Spirit which he giveth us.

Verse 17. **And if children, then heirs]** For the *legitimate* children can alone inherit the estate. This is not an estate to which they succeed in consequence of the death of a former possessor; it is like the promised land, *given by God himself*, and divided among the children of the family.



**Heirs of God]** It is neither an *earthly* portion nor a *heavenly* portion; but GOD *himself*, who is to be their portion. It is not heaven they are to inherit; it is GOD, who is infinitely greater and more glorious than heaven itself. With such powers has God created the soul of man, that nothing less than *himself* can be a sufficient and satisfactory portion for the mind of this most astonishing creature.

**Joint heirs with Christ]** Partaking of the same eternal glory with the glorified human nature of Christ.

**If so be that we suffer with him]** Observe, says Dr. Taylor, how prudently the apostle advances to the harsh affair of *suffering*. He does not mention it till he had raised up their thoughts to the highest object of joy and pleasure-the happiness and glory of a joint inheritance with the ever-blessed Son of God.

We are *heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him*. This, with the additional consideration that we suffer *with Christ*, or, *as* he himself suffered, would greatly qualify the transitory afflictions of this world, and dispose them to attend to the other arguments he had to offer.

Verse 18. **For I reckon that the sufferings, &c.]** If the glory that is to be revealed be the enjoyment of God himself, (see above,) then the sufferings of this life, which, when compared with *eternity*, are but as for a *moment*, are not worthy to be put in competition with this glory which shall be revealed in us. This case is perfectly clear.

Verse 19. **For the earnest expectation of the creature]** There is considerable difficulty in this and the four following verses: and the difficulty lies chiefly in the meaning of the word **ἡ κτίσις**, which we translate *the creature*, and *creation*. Some think that by it the *brute creation* is meant; others apply it to the *Jewish people*; others to the *godly*; others to the *Gentiles*; others to the *good angels*; and others to the *fallen spirits*, both *angelic* and *human*. Dissertations without end have been written on it; and it does not appear that the Christian world are come to any general agreement on the subject. Dr. Lightfoot's mode of explanation appears to me to be the best, on the whole. "There is," says he, "a *twofold* key hanging at this place, which may unlock the whole, and make the sense plain and easy.

1. The *first* is the phrase, **πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις**, which we render *the whole creation*, **#Ro 8:22**, and with which we meet twice elsewhere in the New Testament. **#Mr 16:15: Preach the Gospel, πᾶσιν τῇ κτίσει, to every creature**; and **#Col 1:23: The Gospel was preached, εὐαγγελισθὲν πᾶσιν τῇ κτίσει, to every creature**. Now it is sufficiently apparent what is meant by **πᾶσα κτίσις** in both these places, viz. *all nations*, or the *heathen world*. For that which in St. Mark is, *preach the Gospel to every creature*, is, in St. Matthew, *go and teach, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, all nations*. And this very phrase in this place lays claim to that very interpretation. And the Hebrew **כָּל הַבְּרִיּוֹת** *col habberioth*, which answers to the Greek **πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις**, *every creature*, is applied by the Jews to the *Gentiles*, and that by way of opposition to *Israel*.



2. The *second* key is the word **ματαιοτητι**, #Ro 8:20, which is not unfitly rendered *vanity*; but then this vanity is improperly applied to the *vanishing*, dying, changing state of the creation. For **ματαιοτης**, *vanity*, does not so much denote the *vanishing condition* of the *outward state*, as it does the *inward* vanity or *emptiness* of the mind. So the apostle, speaking of the Gentiles concerning whom he speaks here, tells us **εματαιωθησαν**, *They became vain in their imaginations*, #Ro 1:21; and again, *The Gentiles walk εν ματαιοτητι*, *in the vanity of their mind*, #Eph 4:17; so also, *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise*, **οτι εισι ματαιοι**, *that they are vain*, #1Co 3:20. To all which let me add this farther observation, that throughout this whole place the apostle seems to allude to the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, and their deliverance from it; with a comparison made betwixt the *Jewish* and the *Gentile Church*. When God would deliver Israel from his bondage, he challenges him for *his Son*, and his *first-born*, #Ex 4:22. And in like manner the *Gentiles* earnestly expect and wait for such a *kind of manifestation of the sons of God*, within and among themselves. The *Romans*, to whom the apostle writes, knew well how many predictions and promises it had pleased God to publish by his prophets, concerning gathering together and adopting *sons* to himself among the Gentiles; the *manifestation* of which *sons* the whole Gentile world with a *neck* as it were *stretched out*, as the word **αποκαραδοκια** implies, (**απο**, from, and **καρα**, the head, and **δοκαω**, to expect,) doth now wait for." See the observations at the end of this chapter.

Verse 20. **For the creature was made subject to vanity]** The Gentile world were subject to vanity of mind; but how? *not willingly*, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same. May we not say, *it became vain willingly*, but was made subject to vanity *unwillingly*? For, let us recur to the origin of Gentilism, the confusion of languages, by reason of the attempt to build the tower of Babel; and though there are some passages in the gloss of the Targumists upon this matter that are sufficiently ridiculous, yet as to their *scope* and *design* they are worthy of notice. "*They said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, and let its head reach unto the top of heaven; and let us make a house of worship in the top of it; and let us put a sword in his hand that he may wage war for us against our enemies, before we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*" It is an ancient tradition among the Jews, that this tower was built on an *idolatrous* account. The confusion of tongues, by which true religion was lost in the world, is a proof that the builders of this tower sinned against God in the highest degree. They were inclined to *vanity*, i.e. idolatry, **WILLINGLY**; but they were *subjected to vanity* **UNWILLINGLY**; for this proceeded from the just indignation and vengeance of God. From this time the world lay under heathenism till the bringing in of the Gospel, upwards of 2000 years after. See Lightfoot.

Verse 21. **Because the creature]** This and the preceding verse should be thus connected: *in hope THAT (οτι) the creature itself also shall be delivered*. The word **φθορα** denotes, very frequently, *sinful corruption*. So, #2Pe 1:4: *Corruption through lust*, **της εν επιθυμια φθορας**. #2Co 11:3: *Lest your minds should be corrupted*. #1Co 15:33: *Evil communications corrupt good manners*. The sense, therefore, of the apostle in this place seems to be: the Gentile world shall, in time, be delivered from the bondage of their *sinful corruption*, i.e. the bondage of their lusts and vile affections; and be brought into such a noble liberty as the sons of God enjoy.

Verse 22. **The whole creation groaneth and travaileth]** If it be inquired how the Gentile world groaned and travailed in pain; let them who explain this of the fabric of the material world, tell us

how *that* groans and travails? They must needs own it to be a borrowed and allusive phrase: but in the sense above given, the very literal construction may be admitted.

Verse 23. **And not only they, but ourselves also]** Neither the *Gentiles* only, but we *Jews* also, (however we belong to a nation envious of the heathen,) to whom God hath granted the first fruits of the Spirit; we sigh among ourselves for their sakes, waiting for the adoption; that is, the redemption of our mystical body, whereof the Gentiles make a very great part. *Lightfoot's* works. vol. ii. p. 359 and 707.

The scope and design of St. Paul in these verses may be thus summed up:-The apostle shows that the whole creation is in a suffering state, into which it has been brought by the disobedience of one man, Adam; therefore, it was *made subject to vanity*-pain, sickness, and death; not willingly, for mankind had no part in that transgression which "brought death into the world and all our wo;" but God subjected the whole, purposing to afford them a deliverance and infusing into every heart a *hope* that a more auspicious era should take place; and it is through the influence of this *hope*, which every man possesses, that the present ills are so patiently borne, because all are expecting better days. The great deliverer is the Messiah, and the Gospel days the auspicious era which God intended to bring forward. They who believe in Christ with a heart unto righteousness are freed from the bondage of their *sinful corruption*, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and they look forward with joyous expectation, waiting for the general resurrection, when their *bodies* also shall be redeemed from corruption, and the *whole* man, *body* and *soul*, be adopted into the *family of heaven* ABOVE, as their *souls* had been previously adopted into the *family of faith* BELOW. And although it may be said that the redemption provided by the Gospel can not be an object of hope to those who have never heard of it; yet, as every man has *hope*, and this hope is inspired by God for this very purpose; that it may be the means of supporting them in the ills of life, and God, in inspiring it, had respect to the glorious state of Christianity, therefore it is this state, in effect, that the whole creation are longing for. So Jesus Christ is said, by the Prophet Haggai, **#Hag 2:7**, to be *the desire of all nations*; and yet not one of the nations of the earth had, at that time, heard of him. And thus, as Dr. Whitby has very properly remarked, "desire and expectation are ascribed to creatures, in reference to things they *want*, and which tend to their advantage; notwithstanding they explicitly know nothing of them."

Verse 24. **For we are saved by hope]** We are supported and are comfortable in the expectation we have of receiving from the hand of our God all the good we need in the troubles and adversities of this life, and of having our bodies raised from corruption and death at the general resurrection.

**Hope that is seen is not hope]** As hope signifies *the expectation of future good*, so it necessarily supposes that the object of it is not *seen*, i.e. not *enjoyed*; for to *see*, in Scripture language, sometimes signifies to *enjoy*, as in **#Job 7:7**: *Mine eye shall no more SEE (margin, ENJOY) good*. **#Job 9:25**: *My days flee away, and SEE no good*; i.e. *enjoy* no prosperity. **#Ps 50:23**: *I will SHOW the salvation of God*: I will give that man to *enjoy* my salvation who walks uprightly. **#Mt 5:8**: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall SEE God*; that is, they shall *enjoy* his favour and blessing. See also **#Joh 3:36**; **#Heb 12:14**, and **#1Jo 3:2**. *The hope that is seen*, that is, *enjoyed*, is no longer *hope*, it is *fruition*: and a man cannot *hope* for that which he has in his *possession*.

Verse 25. **But if we hope for that we see not]** If we have a well-grounded expectation of our resurrection and final glorification, knowing that such things are necessarily *future*, and must for a certain time be delayed; then *do we patiently wait for them*, continue patiently to endure the common ills of life, and whatever tribulations we may be exposed to in consequence of our Christian profession; for we know, FAITHFUL *is he who has promised*. *Hope* is a sort of universal blessing, and one of the greatest which God has granted to man. To mankind, in general, life would be intolerable without it; and it is as necessary as *faith* is even to the followers of God.

The ancients have a very instructive and elegant fable concerning it. "*Prometheus* having made a human body, went up to heaven, and stole some celestial fire to animate it: *Jupiter*, incensed at the theft, sent down *Pandora*, with a box full of diseases and plagues of every kind, as an ensnaring present to Prometheus; but he refused to accept it. *Epimetheus* took and opened it, and instantly all those diseases, &c., by which mankind have been made miserable, flew out, and spread themselves over the whole earth; and only HOPE remained at the bottom of the box." This fable explains itself, as to its main design. Men find life, with its various and unavoidable ills, only supportable by the *hope* they have of not only getting safely through them, but of enjoying a state of blessedness in the end. Hope is still at the bottom; and therefore man is encouraged to bear up in all the pressures of life. Take away *hope*, and then black *despair* and indescribable wretchedness would be the instant result. *Hope* stands justly among the highest mercies of God.

Verse 26. **The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities]** The *same Spirit*, το πνευμα, mentioned before as bearing witness with ours that we are the children of God; and consequently it is not a *disposition* or *frame of mind*, for the disposition of our mind surely cannot help the infirmities of our minds.

The word συναντιλαμβάνεται is very inadequately expressed by *helpeth*. It is compounded of συν, *together*, αντι, *against*, and λαμβανομαι, *to support* or *help*, and signifies such assistance as is afforded by any two persons to each other, who mutually bear the same load or carry it between them. He who prays, receives help from the Spirit of God; but he who prays not receives no such help. Whatever our strength may be, we must put it forth, even while most implicitly depending on the strength of God himself.

**For we know not what we should pray for as we ought]** And should therefore be liable to endless mistakes in our prayers, if suitable desires were not excited by the Holy Spirit and power received to bring these desires, by prayer, before the throne of grace.

**But the Spirit itself]** αυτο το πνευμα, *The same Spirit*, viz. the Spirit that witnesses of our adoption and sonship, #Ro 8:15, 16, *makes intercession for us*. Surely if the apostle had designed to teach us that he meant *our own sense* and *understanding* by the *Spirit*, he never could have spoken in a manner in which plain common sense was never likely to comprehend his meaning. Besides, how can it be said that our *own spirit*, our *filial disposition*, bears witness with our *own spirit*; that our own spirit helps the infirmities of our own spirit; that our own spirit teaches our own spirit that of which it is ignorant; and that our own spirit maketh intercession for our own spirit, with groanings unutterable? This would have been both incongruous and absurd. We must therefore understand these places of that help and influence which the followers of God receive from the Holy Ghost; and

consequently, of the fulfilment of the various promises relative to this point which our Lord made to his disciples, particularly in **#Joh 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7**; and particularly **#Joh 16:13, 14**: *Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.*

Verse 27. **He maketh intercession for the saints**] The word **εντυγχανω** signifies to apply one's self to a person in behalf of another; to *intercede* or *negotiate for*. Our Lord makes intercession for us, by *negotiating* and *managing*, as our friend and agent, all the affairs pertaining to our salvation. And the Spirit of God makes intercession for the saints, not by supplication to God on their behalf, but by *directing* and *qualifying* their supplications in a proper manner, by his agency and influence upon their hearts; which, according to the Gospel scheme, is the peculiar work and office of the Holy Spirit. See *Taylor*.

**According to the will of God.**] **κατα θεον**. According to the mind, intention, or design of God. And thus the prayers which we offer up, and the desires which subsist in the unutterable groanings, are all such as are pleasing in the sight of God. So that God, whose is the Spirit, and who is acquainted with the mind of the Spirit, knows what he means when he leads the saints to express themselves in words, desires, groans, sighs, or tears: in each God reads the language of the Holy Ghost, and prepares the answer according to the request.

From all this we learn that a *fluency in prayer* is not essential to *praying*: a man may pray most powerfully in the estimation of God, who is not able to utter even one word. The unutterable groan is big with meaning, and God understands it, because it contains the language of his own Spirit. Some desires are too mighty to be expressed; there is no language expressive enough to give them proper form and distinct vocal sound: such desires show that they came from God; and as they came from him, so they express what God is disposed to do, and what he has purposed to do. This is a matter of great encouragement to all those who are agonizing to enter in at the strait gate.

Verse 28. **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God**] To understand this verse aright, let us observe: 1. That the persons in whose behalf all things work for good are they *who love God*, and, consequently, who live in the *spirit of obedience*. 2. It is not said that all things *shall* work for good, but that **συμμεργει**, *they work now* in the behalf of him who *loveth now*, **αγαπωσι**; for both verbs are in the *present tense*. 3. All these things *work together*; while *they* are working, God's providence is working, his Spirit is working, and *they are working TOGETHER with him*. And whatever troubles, or afflictions, or persecutions may arise, God presses them into their service; and they make a part of the general working, and are caused to contribute to the general good of the person *who now loves God*, and who is working by faith and love under the influence and operation of the Holy Ghost. They who say sin works for good to them that love God speak blasphemous nonsense. A man who *now loves God* is not *now sinning* against God; and the promise belongs only to the *present time*: and as love is the true incentive to obedience, the man who is entitled to the promise can never, while thus entitled, (loving God,) be found in the commission of sin. But though this be a good general sense for these words, yet the *all things* mentioned here by the apostle seem more particularly to mean those things mentioned in **#Ro 8:28-30**.

**To them who are the called according to his purpose.]** Dr. Taylor translates τοῖς κλητοῖς, the *invited*; and observes that it is a metaphor taken from *inviting* guests, or making them welcome to a feast. As if he had said: Certainly all things work together for their good; for this reason, because they are called, invited, or made welcome to the blessings of the covenant, (which is ratified in eating of the covenant sacrifice,) according to God's original purpose first declared to Abraham, **#Ge 17:4: Thou shalt be a father of many nations-and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him, #Ge 18:18.** Thus this clause is to be understood; and thus it is an argument to prove that all things, how afflictive soever, shall work for our good while we continue to love God. Our being *called* or *invited*, according to God's purpose, proves that all things work for our good, on the supposition *that we love God*, and not otherwise. For our *loving God*, or making a due improvement of our calling, is evidently inserted by the apostle to make good his argument. He does not pretend to prove that all things shall concur to the everlasting happiness of *all* that are *called*; but only to those of the called *who love God*. Our calling, thus qualified is the ground of his argument, which he prosecutes and completes in the two next verses. Our *calling* he takes for granted, as a thing evident and unquestionable among all Christians. But you will say: How is it evident and unquestionable that we are *called*? I answer: From our being in the visible Church, and professing the faith of the Gospel. For always, in the apostolic writings, all that are in the visible Church, and profess the faith of the Gospel, are numbered among the *called* or *invited*; i.e. among the persons who are invited to feast on the covenant sacrifice, and who thus, in reference to themselves, confirm and ratify the covenant. As for what is termed *effectual calling*, as distinguished from the general invitations of the Gospel, it is a distinction which divines have invented without any warrant from the sacred writings. Our calling, therefore, is considered by the apostle in the nature of a self-evident proposition, which nobody doubts or denies; or which, indeed, no Christian ought to doubt, or can call in question, *Taylor's notes*.

Verse 29. **For whom he did foreknow, &c.]** "In this and the following verse the apostle shows *how* our *calling* is an argument that all things work together to advance our eternal happiness, by showing the several *steps* which the wisdom and goodness of God have settled, in order to complete our salvation. In order to this he first gives us, in this verse, the *foundation* and *finishing*, or the *beginning* and *end*, of the scheme of our redemption: *For whom God did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* To *foreknow*, here signifies to *design before*, or at the first forming of the scheme; to bestow the *favour* and *privilege* of being God's people upon any set of men, **#Ro 11:2.** This is the *foundation* or first step of our salvation; namely, the *purpose* and *grace of God*, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, **#2Ti 1:9.** Then, he *knew* or *favoured* us; for in this sense the word *to know* is taken in a great variety of places, both in the Old and New Testaments. And as he *knew* the GENTILES *then*, when the scheme was laid, and before any part of it was executed, consequently, in reference to the execution of this scheme, he *foreknew* us. This is the first step of our salvation, and the *end* or *finishing* of it is our *conformity to the Son of God in eternal glory*, **#Ro 8:17**, which includes and supposes our *moral* conformity to him. When God *knew* us, at the forming of the Gospel scheme; or, when he intended to bestow on us the privilege of being his people; he then *destinated* or designed us to be conformed to the image of his Son; and, as he *destinated* or *determined* us then to this very high honour and happiness, he *pre-destinated*, *fore-ordained*, or *pre-determined* us to it. Thus we are to understand the foundation and finishing of the scheme of our salvation. The *foundation* is the *foreknowledge*, or *gracious purpose* of God; the *finishing* is our being joint heirs with Christ. Now, our *calling* or *invitation* (**see**



**Clarke on "Ro 8:28")** stands in connection with both these. 1. It stands in connection with God's *foreknowledge*; and so it is a true and valid calling: for we are *called, invited, or chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, who may bestow his blessings upon any people, as may seem good in his sight, **#1Pe 1:2**; consequently, we have a good title to the blessings of the Gospel to which we are *called or invited*. And this was to be proved, that the Jew, to whom the apostle particularly wrote, might see that the Gentiles being now called into the Church of God was not an accidental thing, but a matter which God had determined when he conceived the Gospel scheme. Thus our calling is connected with God's *foreknowledge*. 2. It stands also in connection with our being *conformed to the image of his Son*; for we are *invited* by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, **#2Th 2:14**. And therefore, supposing, what the apostle supposes, that we *love God*, it is certain, from our being *called*, that we shall be *glorified* with the sons of God; and so our calling proves the point, that all things should work together for our good in our present state, because it proves that we are intended for eternal glory; as he shows in the next verse. For we must understand his *foreknowing, predestinating, calling, and justifying*, in relation to his *glorifying*; and that none are finally *glorified*, but those who, according to his *purpose*, are *conformed to the image of his Son*." Taylor.

**The first-born among many brethren.]** That he might be the chief or head of all the redeemed; for HIS *human nature* is the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead; and He is the first human being that, after having passed through death, was raised to eternal glory. See Dr. Taylor.

Verse 30. **Whom he did predestinate, &c.]** The *Gentiles*, whom He determined to call into his Church with the Jewish people, *He called*-He invited by the preaching of the Gospel, to believe on his Son Jesus Christ. It is worthy of note, that all that is spoken here refers to what *had already taken place*; for the *calling, justifying, and glorifying* are here represented as having *already taken place*, as well as the *foreknowing* and the *predestinating*. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the apostle refers to what God had *already done* among the Jews and Gentiles: though he may also speak of the things that *were not* as though they *were*.

**He also justified]** Pardoned the sins of all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turned unto him.

**He also glorified.]** He has *honoured and dignified* the Gentiles with the highest privileges, and he *has* already taken many of them to the kingdom of glory, and many more are on their way thither; and all who *love him*, and continue faithful unto death, shall inherit that glory eternally. Hence it is added, *them he also glorified*; for all the honours which he confers on them have respect to and are intended to promote their endless felicity; and though the terms are here used in a more general sense, yet, if we take them more restrictedly, we must consider that in the work of justification *sanctification* is implied; justification being the foundation and beginning of that work. From all this we learn that none will be *glorified* who have not been *sanctified and justified*; that the *justified* are those who have been *called or invited* by the Gospel of Christ; that those who have had this *calling* are they to whom God *determined* to grant this privilege-*they* did not choose this salvation first, but God sent it to them when they knew him not-and therefore the salvation of the Gentile world, as well as that of the Jews, comes through the gratuitous mercy of God himself, was the result of infinite designs, and stands on the same ground as the calling, &c., of the Jewish people. The word δοξα,

which we render *glory*, and *δοξαζω*, to *glorify*, both mean to *render illustrious, eminent, &c., &c.*, in various parts of the New Testament; and in this sense the verb is used **#Joh 11:4; 12:23, 28; 13:31, 32; 14:13; 15:8; 21:19; #Ac 3:13; 11:13**; in none of which places *eternal beatification* can be intended. Here it seems to mean that those whom God had called into a state of justification he had rendered *illustrious* by innumerable gifts, graces, and privileges, in the same manner as he had done to the Israelites of old.

The whole of the preceding discourse will show that every thing here is *conditional*, as far as it relates to the ultimate salvation of any person professing the Gospel of Christ; for the promises are made to *character*, and not to *persons*, as some have most injudiciously affirmed. The apostle insists upon a *character* all along from the beginning of the chapter. **#Ro 8:1**: *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* **#Ro 8:13**: *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, &c.* The absolute necessity of *holiness* to salvation is the very *subject* of his discourse; this necessity he positively affirms, and establishes by the most solid arguments. At the very entrance of his argument here, he takes care to settle the connection between our *calling* and our love and obedience to God, on purpose to prevent that mistake into which so many have fallen, through their great inattention to the *scope* of his reasoning. **#Ro 8:28**: *All things work together for good-To whom? To THEM that LOVE GOD: to them that are the called according to his purpose. To them that love God*, because they are called according to his purpose; for those only who love God can reap any benefit by this *predestination*, vocation, or any other instance of God's favour. See the *observations* at the end of this chapter.

Verse 31. **What shall we then say to these things?**] What conclusion should we draw from the above premises? From all that was already laid down in the preceding chapters, but especially in the preceding verses, from **#Ro 8:28-30** inclusive. As if he had said: What comfort may we derive from these doctrines? God has called us all to *holiness*, and to *love to him*, which is the principle of holiness. We are persecuted and despised, it is true, and we may be more so; but, as God has called us to love him, *and all things work together for good to them that love him*; and, as his covenant with Abraham, while he was in his *Gentile* state, shows his gracious *purpose* towards us *Gentiles*, whom he has foreknown, who have been objects of his *gracious foreknowledge*, as well as the *Jews*, and who have now the fullest proof that we were so, by his sending us the *Gospel*, and showing us, in it, that if the Israelites were to be a *holy priesthood, a royal nation*, we are no less favoured, as he has *predestinated*, from the *beginning determined*, that *we should be conformed to the image of his Son*, who is to be the *first-born among many brethren*, the *head and chief* of all *converted Jews and Gentiles*, and, in order to our final salvation, has *called*, invited us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, has *justified* those who do believe, and has *glorified*, highly *honoured*, and *adorned* them with *innumerable gifts and graces*, and, if they continue to possess that faith which worketh by love, will bring them, both *body and soul*, to his *eternal glory*, their *bodies being made like unto his glorious body*:-seeing, therefore, all these things are so, what comfort in our tribulations shall we derive from them?-Why this: *If God be for us, who can be against us?* He who is infinitely *wise* has undertaken to *direct* us: He who is infinitely *powerful* has undertaken to *protect* us: He who is infinitely *good* has undertaken to *save* us. What *cunning, strength, or malice*, can prevail against his *wisdom, power, and goodness*? None. Therefore we are safe who love God; and not only shall sustain no essential damage by the persecutions of ungodly men, but even these things work together for our good.



Verse 32. **He that spared not his own Son]** And can we, his sincere followers, doubt of the safety of our state, or the certainty of his protection? No: for if he loved us, Gentiles and Jews, so intensely as to *deliver up* to death his own Son *for us all*, can he withhold from us any minor blessing? Nay, will he not, on the contrary, *freely give us all things*? For if he told Abraham, who is the father of the *faithful*, and representative of *us all*, and with whom the covenant was made, that, because he had not withheld from *him* his only son Isaac, but *delivered him up to that death* which he thought his God had required, in blessing, he would bless him; and in multiplying, he would multiply him; that his seed should possess the gate of his enemies; and that in it all the nations of the earth should be blessed, **#Ge 22:16-19;** will HE not give us all that was spiritually intended by these promises, whose only begotten Son was not sacrificed in a *figure*, but *really*, in order to purchase every blessing that the soul of man can need and that the hand of God can dispense.

Verse 33. This and the two following verses contain a string of questions, most appropriately introduced and most powerfully urged, tending to show the safety of the state of those who have believed the Gospel of the grace of God. I shall lay these verses down as they are pointed by the best Greek critics:-

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?-God who justifieth? Who is he that condemneth?-Christ who died? or, rather, who is risen again? He, who is at the right hand of God? He, who maketh intercession for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?-Tribulation? or distress? or persecution? or famine? or nakedness? or peril? or sword?" In all these questions the apostle intimates that if neither GOD nor CHRIST *would* bring any charge against them who love him, none else *could*. And as God justifies through Christ who died, consequently no charge *can* lie against these persons, as God alone could produce any; and He, so far from doing this, has justified them-freely forgiven their trespasses.

For the proper meaning and sense of the terms *chosen, elect, called, &c., &c.*, see the discourse prefixed to this epistle; and especially sect. vi. p. 19, &c., and sect. vii. p. 23, &c.

Verse 34. **Who is even at the right hand of God]** To which he has exalted our human nature, which he took in conjunction with his Divinity; and there he *maketh intercession for us*-manages all the concerns of his own kingdom in general, and of every member of his Church in particular.

Verse 35. **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?]** I do think that this question has been generally misunderstood. The apostle is referring to the persecutions and tribulations to which genuine Christians were exposed through their attachment to Christ, and the gracious provision God had made for their support and final salvation. As in this provision God had shown his infinite love to them in providing Jesus Christ as their sin-offering, and Jesus Christ had shown his love in suffering death upon the cross for them; so, here, he speaks of the love of the *followers* of God to that Christ who had first loved *them*. Therefore the question is not, Who shall separate the love of Christ from us? or prevent Christ from loving us? but, Who shall separate *us* from the love of Christ? *Who* or *what* shall be able to remove *our affection* from him? And the questions that immediately follow show that this is the sense of the passage; for the *tribulation, distress, &c.*, which he enumerates, are things by which *they* might be affected, but by which *Christ* could not be affected; and, consequently, the question most evidently refers to *their love to him* who had first loved them,

and, while it affords a strong *presumption* of their *perseverance*, furnishes a most powerful argument against *apostasy*.

Shall **tribulation?**] *φλυψις*, grievous affliction, or distress of any kind; from *φλιβω*, to compress, oppress, straiten, &c.; any thing by which a man is rendered miserable.

**Or distress?**] *στενοχωρια*, a word of nearly the same import with the former, but more *intense* in its signification. It signifies *straitness*, being *hemmed in* on every side, without the possibility of getting out or escaping; from *στενος*, *strait* or *narrow*, and *χωρος*, a *place*.

**Or persecution?**] *διωγμος*, from *διωκω*, to *pursue*, *press upon*, *prosecute*, signifies such *pursuing* as an enemy uses in order to overtake the object of his malice, that he may destroy him.

**Or famine?**] *λιμος*, from *λειπω*, to *fail*; the total want of bread, and all the necessaries of life.

**Or nakedness?**] *γυμνοτης*, being absolutely without clothing; forcibly expressed by the derivation of the word *γυια μονα εχων*, *having one's limbs only*, being totally *unclothed*.

**Or peril?**] *κινδυνος*, a state of extreme and continued danger, perplexing and distressing with grievous forebodings and alarms; derived from *κινει τας οδυνας*, *it excites anguish*; because much evil is *felt*, and much more *feared*.

**Or sword?**] *μαχαιρα*, *slaughter*; the total destruction of life, and especially *beheading*, and such like, done by the order of the civil magistrate; for the word is used in this epistle, **#Ro 13:4**, to signify the *authority* and *power* which he has of judicially terminating life; i.e. of inflicting *capital punishment*.

Verse 36. **As it is written]** And these are no more than we may naturally expect from the present constitution of the world, and the positive predictions of the prophet, **#Ps 44:22**, who foresaw that a wicked world would always persecute and oppress the true followers of God.

Verse 37. **Nay]** as the prophet adds in the same place, *all this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant*, **#Ro 8:17, 18**, so all these things may happen unto us; but *in all these things we are more than conquerors*; WE abide faithful in the new covenant of our God; and HE is faithful who has promised to support and make us more than conquerors; i.e. to give us a complete *triumph* over sin, and death, and hell, not leaving one enemy unsubdued.

Verse 38. **For I am persuaded]** After the blessed experience we have had of support by the grace and Spirit of him that loved us, that neither fear of *death*, nor hope of *life*, nor evil *angels*, nor *principalities*, nor *powers*, persecuting us for Christ's sake; nor the *things* we endure at *present*, nor the *things to come*, whatever tribulation we may be called to suffer in future;

Verse 39. Nor *height-of honour*, nor *depth-of ignominy*, nor *any other creature*, *ουτε τις κτισις ετερα*, (nor any other thing whatever,) *shall be able to separate us*, who love God, *from the love of*

*God, which he has vouchsafed to us in Christ Jesus.* See *Whitby*. And for farther observations on the subject of the 29th and 30th verses, see at the end of the chapter.

1. THE confidence expressed by the apostle at the end of this chapter, is as *rational* as it is *bold*. On the *premises* laid down by him, in reference to which he has most logically conducted his whole argument, the *conclusion* to which he arrives is as natural and forcible as it is legitimate. The permanency of the Christian Church, in all the tribulations it has endured from pagans and papists, is a full proof of the correctness of the apostle's reasoning. The true followers of Christ can never be forsaken by him. And his Church, which is founded on the rock, can never be shaken down by the tempests of persecution. And what God does for his *Church* in general, (the collective body of those who believe in the Lord Jesus, love, and obey him,) he does for every *individual* in that body: no man that trusts in him can be confounded. While the *love of God* is in his heart, and the *work of God* in his *hand*, he may be as fully *persuaded* as he is of his own being, that *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other thing whatsoever, shall be able to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus*. The reader who has any knowledge of what is *great, commanding, and sublime* in composition, will not hesitate to add here, with Dr. Taylor: "The conclusion of this chapter is the most elegant and sublime piece of writing I remember ever to have read. It is founded on the grand and solid principles of the Gospel; it breathes the true spirit of Christian magnanimity; raises our minds far above all things created; and shows, in a bright and heavenly view, the greatness of soul and the strong consolation which the Gospel inspires. God grant that it may stand clear before our understandings, and be transcribed into all our hearts! They who despise the *Gospel* despise all that is *great, and happy, and glorious!*"

2. The doctrine of the necessity of personal holiness, so clearly and strongly laid down in the former part of this chapter, should be deeply considered by every person professing godliness; and while from the seventh chapter they learn that they have an infected and morally diseased nature, they should learn from the eighth that to destroy the work of the devil was Jesus Christ manifested; and that no soul can be said to be saved by Jesus Christ who is not saved from its sins. What a full proof is it of the fallen state of man, that there should be found persons professing Christianity more fervent in their pleadings for the *necessary* continuance of indwelling sin, than they are for the mind that was in Christ. The *seventh* chapter, because there are some expressions which, being misunderstood, seem to favour this doctrine, is read and incessantly quoted: the eighth chapter, though given by the same inspiration, yet because it so strongly shows the necessity of being saved from all sin, is seldom read and scarcely ever quoted!

3. The restoration of the brute creation to a state of happiness has been thought by several to be the doctrine of **#Ro 8:19-25**. In the notes on those verses I have given reasons against this opinion, and have proved that the *Gentiles*, and not the irrational part of the creation, are the persons of whom the apostle speaks; nor can any consistent interpretation be given of the place, if it be applied to the brute creation. But, although this doctrine is not contained in the above verses, it does not follow that the doctrine itself is not true. Indeed, there are several reasons which render the supposition very probable. 1. The brute creation never sinned against God, nor are they capable of it, and consequently cannot be justly liable to punishment. 2. But the whole brute creation is in a state of suffering, and partake of the common infirmities and privations of life, as well as mankind: they

suffer, but who can say that they suffer *justly*? 3. As they appear to be necessarily involved in the sufferings of sinful man, and yet neither through their fault nor their folly, it is natural to suppose that the Judge of all the earth, who ever does right, will find some means by which these innocent creatures shall be compensated for their sufferings. 4. That they have no compensation *here*, their afflictions, labours, and death prove; and if they are to have any compensation, they must have it in *another state*. 5. God, the fountain of all goodness, must have originally designed them for that measure of happiness which is suited to the powers with which he had endowed them; but, since the fall of man, they never had that happiness; and, in their present circumstances, never can. 6. In reference to *intelligent* beings, God has formed his purposes in reference to their happiness on the ground of their rational natures. He has decreed that they shall be happy *if they will*, all the means of it being placed within their power; and, if they be ultimately miserable, it is the effect of their own unconstrained choice. Therefore his purpose is fulfilled, either in their happiness or misery; because he has purposed that they shall be happy if they please, and that misery shall be the result of their refusal. 7. But it does not appear that the brute creation are capable of this choice; and it is evident that they are not placed in their present misery through either their *choice* or their *sin*; and if no purpose of God can be ultimately frustrated, these creatures must be restored to that state of happiness for which they have been made, and of which they have been deprived through the transgression of man. 8. To say that the enjoyments which they have in this life are a sufficient compensation, is most evidently false; for, had not sin entered into the world, they would have had much greater enjoyments, without pain, excessive labour and toil, and without death, and all those sufferings which arise from its predisposing causes. Nor does it appear that they have much happiness from eating, drinking, and rest, as they have these only in the proportion in which they are necessary to their existence as the slaves of men. Therefore, allowing that they have even gratification and enjoyment in life, they have much less than they would have had had not sin entered into the world; and consequently they have been deprived of the greater portion of the happiness designed for them by their bountiful Creator. 9. It is therefore obvious that the gracious purpose of God has not been fulfilled in them; and that, as they have not lost their happiness through their own fault, both the beneficence and justice of God are bound to make them a reparation. 10. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that, as from the present constitution of things they cannot have the happiness designed for them in *this state*, they must have it in *another*.

4. On the subject of the *foreknowledge* of God, some observations have been made at the conclusion of the notes on the second chapter of Acts. On the subject of the *prescience* and *predestination* mentioned here, **#Ro 8:29, 30**, vast volumes have been written, and the Christian world greatly agitated and perplexed. These doctrines of men have very little place in the texts in question. After a long and serious investigation of this business, I am led to conclude that, whether the doctrine of the *decrees* be true or false, it does not exist in these verses.

No portion of the word of God has been more unhappily misunderstood than several parts of the Epistle to the Romans; because men have applied to *individuals* what belongs to *nations*; and referred to *eternity* transactions which have taken place in *time*.

We have already seen that one grand aim of the apostle in writing this epistle was: 1. To prove, to both Jews and Gentiles, that they were all under sin, and that neither of them had any claim either on the justice or beneficence of God; yet he, of his own free mercy, had revealed himself to the Jews,

and crowned them with innumerable privileges; and, 2. That, as he was no respecter of persons, his mercy was as free to the *Gentiles* as to them, being equally their God as he was the God of the Jews, and therefore had, by the Gospel, called them to a state of salvation; and to this display of his mercy the two verses in question seem particularly to refer, and show us not what God *will* do for some selected individuals, but what he *has already done* for *nations*.

After having shown that the whole Gentile world was groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, he shows that it was, according to the *affectionate purpose*, *προθεσιν*, of God, that the Gentiles should be also called into the glorious liberty of the sons of God-into equal privileges with the Jews. He therefore represents them as objects of God's *gracious foreknowledge*. That the word *προγινωσκω*, which literally signifies to *know*, or *discern beforehand*, and to *know so as to determine*, signifies also to *approve*, or *love before*, to be well affected to, is not only evident from *יָדָא* *yada* in Hebrew, but also from the simple verb *γινωσκω*, in Greek, by which it is translated, and to which the compound verb repeatedly answers, without any *extension* of meaning by means of the *preposition*, as its use among the best Greek writers proves: and it is evident that the apostle uses the word in the sense of *loving*, *being graciously affected to*, **#Ro 11:1, 2.** *I say then, hath God cast away his people, which he FOREKNEW, *ον προεγνω*; to whom he has been so long graciously affected? By no means.* As, therefore, he had been so long graciously affected towards the Jews, so has he towards the Gentiles. His call of Abraham, and the promises made to him, are the proof of it. The Jews, thus *foreknown*, were *called* into a glorious state of salvation, and endowed with privileges the most extraordinary ever bestowed on any people; as their whole history testifies. But is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, **#Ro 3:29**; and to prove this is the main subject of the *ninth* chapter. Now, as he is the God of the Gentiles, he *foreknew*, had from the beginning a *gracious purpose* to them as well as to the Jews; and, being thus graciously disposed towards them, he determined *προωρισε*, from *προ*, before, and *οριζω*, to *bound*, *define*, &c., he defined, circumscribed, and determined the boundaries of this important business from the beginning, that they also should be taken into his Church, and conformed to the image of his Son; and, as Jesus Christ was to be their *pattern*, it must be by his *Gospel* that they should be brought into the Church; and consequently, *that* bringing in could not take place *before* the revelation of Christ. Having therefore thus *foreknown* and thus predestinated *them* ALSO, he *called* them ALSO by the Gospel; he *justified* them ALSO on their believing; and he *glorified* them ALSO, dignified them also with the same privileges, blessings, honours, and Divine gifts: so that they were now what the Jews had been before, *the peculiar people of God*. The apostle, therefore, speaks here not of what they *should be*, or of what they *might be*, but of what they *then were*-the *called*, the *justified*, the highly *honoured* of God. **See Clarke's note on "Ro 8:30".**

It is strange that so obvious a meaning of the passage should not have been noticed; but the word *δοξαζω*, which we render *to glorify*, and by which we understand *eternal beatification*, which it is very seldom used to express, being taken in this sense in the passage in question, fixed the meaning of the preceding terms; and thus the whole passage was applied to things *eternal*, which had reference only to things in time. This seems to me to be the true key of the passage, and the whole scope of the epistle, and especially of the context, which shows that this is the sense in which it should be understood. The passages understood in this way illustrate the infinite mercy and wisdom of God; they show that whatever appearances his providential dealings may assume of partiality

towards any particular people, yet he is equally the Father of the spirits of all flesh; hateth nothing that he hath made; is loving to all; that his tender mercies are over all his works; and that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto the knowledge of the truth and be saved. Hence, whatever he did for the Jews he purposed to do for the Gentiles: if he foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified the *former*; he ALSO foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified the latter; having brought them into the same state of salvation, with a vast extension of blessings and higher degrees of honour. As the Jews forfeited their privileges, and now, instead of being glorified, instead of being highly honoured, and rendered illustrious, they are degraded, brought down, and rendered contemptible; because they have not made a proper use of their election, they are now reprobated; so a similar reverse awaits the Gentiles if they sin after the similitude of their transgression; and it is against this that the apostle so solemnly warns them, **#Ro 11:20-22**: *Because of unbelief they (the Jews) were broken off-thou (the Gentiles) standest by faith. If God spared not the NATURAL BRANCHES, take heed lest he also spare not THEE. Behold the goodness and severity of God! on them which FELL severity; but toward THEE goodness, IF THOU CONTINUE in his goodness; otherwise THOU ALSO shalt be CUT OFF.*

5. This is also a lesson of solemn instruction to *Christians in general*: God has called them into a glorious state of salvation, and has furnished them with every requisite help to enable them to work out that salvation with fear and trembling. As it is an awful thing to receive the grace of God in vain, (whether that grace imply the common benefits of the Gospel, or those especial blessings received by believing souls,) so every person professing godliness should be jealous over himself lest he should trifle with matters of eternal moment; for, should he even *neglect* so great a salvation, his escape would be impossible. **#Heb 2:3**; and if so, to what severe punishment must they be exposed who *despise and reject* it?

## ROMANS

### CHAPTER IX.

*Paul expresses his great sorrow for the unbelief and obstinacy of the Jews, 1-3. Whose high privileges he enumerates, 4, 5. Points out the manner in which God has chosen to communicate the knowledge of his name to both Jews and Gentiles; and how he deals, whether in judgment or mercy, with individuals; and produces the cases of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Pharaoh, 6-17. God shows mercy and judgment as he thinks proper, and none have a right to find fault with his proceedings, 18-20. He has the same power over the human race as the potter has over the clay, 21-23. The prophets predicted the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, 24-29. The Gentiles have attained to the knowledge of God's method of saving sinners; while the Jews have not attained this knowledge, 30, 31. The reason why the Jews have not attained the salvation provided for them in the Gospel, 32, 33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. IX.

To this and the tenth chapter, Dr. Taylor has prefixed the following judicious summary:-

The apostle has largely proved in the preceding chapters, that the *grace of God* extends to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews*; and that the dispensation of God's mercy was absolutely, and in itself, free to all who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, in opposition to the merit of any works, or of conformity to any law whatever; and that the Gentiles have, by *faith*, a good title to the blessings of God's covenant, to which blessings the Jews cannot have a title any other way. Hitherto the apostle has not considered the Jews as *rejected*, except in an indirect way, but that they had the possibility of continuing in the Church, from entering into which they should not attempt to prevent the Gentiles, but allow them to be sharers in the mercies of God; and hence his language is in sum this: Why may not believing Gentiles be admitted, pardoned, and saved, as well as you?

But in this chapter, and the two following, the apostle considers the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom and covenant of God under the notion of *calling* or *invitation*, and of *election* or *choice*: which shows that he views the two parties in a light different to that in which he had before placed them. The *Gentiles* he considers as *invited* into the kingdom of God, and as *chosen* to be his people; and the *Jews* he considers as *left out* and *rejected*; for as the main body of them had now rejected the Gospel of Christ, he saw that God was about to unchurch them, overturn their polity, destroy their temple, and disperse them over the face of the earth. Thus he knew they would be accursed, or anathematized from Christ, and reduced to a level with the heathen nations of the world. And the event has proved that his declarations were dictated by the Spirit of truth.

It is observable that, agreeably to his delicate manner of writing, and his nice and tender treatment of his countrymen, he never mentions their *rejection*-a subject extremely painful to his thoughts-other than in a *wish* that he *himself were accursed from Christ* for them, or to prevent them from being accursed from Christ, (**#Ro 9:3,**) till he comes to Rom. 11, where he has much to say in their favour, even considered, as at present, rejected. But it is very evident that his arguments in this chapter rest on the supposition that the main body of the Jewish nation would be cast out of



the visible kingdom of God; and it is for this reason that in this and the two following chapters he considers the reception of any people into the kingdom and covenant of God under the relative notion of *inviting* and *choosing*, or of *calling* and *election*. The Jews were *rejected* and *reprobated*; the Gentiles were *chosen* and *called*, or *elected*. As this is most obviously the apostle's meaning, it is strange that any should apply his doctrine to the particular and unconditional reprobation and election of *individuals*.

It is upon this *rejection* of the *Jews* that the *calling* and *election* of the *Gentiles* rest. If the Jews be not rejected, but are still the visible Church and kingdom of God, then the *Gentiles*, according to the most proper inference from the apostle's doctrine, have no right to the blessings of the kingdom. Instead of being *invited* or *called*, they are intruders at the heavenly *feast*; and this the unbelieving Jews laboured to prove, and thus unhinge the believing Gentiles by persuading them that they were not duly taken into the Church of God; that the Jews were, and ever must continue to be, the *only* Church and kingdom of God, and that they could not be cast off so long as God was *faithful to his promise* to Abraham; and that the Gentiles were most miserably deceived when they supposed they were brought into that kingdom by faith in Christ, whereas there was no way of entering it, or of being entitled to its privileges, but by *submitting to the law of Moses*. This being the fixed opinion of the Jews, and the ground on which they opposed the Gentiles and endeavoured to sap the foundation of their hope of salvation from the Gospel of Christ, it was therefore a matter of the utmost importance to be able to prove that the Jews, by rejecting Christ and his Gospel, were themselves cast out of the Church, and this in a way perfectly consistent with the truth of the promise made to Abraham. He had slightly touched on this subject at the beginning of the third chapter; but it would have broken in too much on the thread of his discourse to have pursued the argument there, for which reason he appears to have reserved it to this place, where he (1) solemnly declares his tenderest affection for his countrymen, and his real grief of heart for their infidelity and consequent rejection, **#Ro 9:1-5**; (2) Answers objections against this rejection, **#Ro 9:6-23**; (3) Proves the *calling of the Gentiles* from their own *Scriptures*, **#Ro 9:24-30**; (4) Gives the true state and reasons of the *rejection* of the Jews and the *calling* of the Gentiles, **#Ro 9:30** to **#Ro 10:14**; (5) Proves the necessity of the apostolic mission to the Gentiles in order to their salvation, **#Ro 10:14-21**.

And all this was intended at once to vindicate the Divine dispensations; to convince the infidel Jew; to satisfy the believing Gentile that his *calling* or *invitation* into the Church of God was *valid*; to arm him against the cavils and objections of the unbelieving Jews, and to dispose the Christian Jew to receive and own the believing Gentile as a member of the family and kingdom of God, by Divine right, equal to any to which he himself could pretend. See Taylor's notes, p. 321, &c.

Verse 1. **I say the truth in Christ, I lie not]** This is one of the most solemn oaths any man can possibly take. He appeals to Christ as the searcher of hearts that he tells the truth; asserts that his conscience was free from all guile in this matter, and that the Holy Ghost bore him testimony that what he said was true. Hence we find that the *testimony* of a man's *own conscience*, and the *testimony* of the *Holy Ghost*, are two distinct things, and that the apostle had *both* at the same time.

As the apostle had still remaining a very awful part of his commission to execute, namely, to declare to the Jews not only that God had *chosen the Gentiles*, but had *rejected them* because they had rejected Christ and his Gospel, it was necessary that he should assure them that however he had

been persecuted by them because he had embraced the Gospel, yet it was so far from being a gratification to him that they had now fallen under the displeasure of God, that it was a subject of continual distress to his mind, and that it produced in him *great heaviness and continual sorrow*.

Verse 3. **For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ]** This and the two preceding verses are thus paraphrased by Dr. Taylor: I am so far from insisting on the doctrine (of the rejection of the Jews) out of any ill-will to my countrymen, that I solemnly declare, in the sincerity of my heart, without the least fiction or dissimulation-and herein I have the testimony of my own conscience, enlightened and directed by the Spirit of God-that I am so far from taking pleasure in the rejection of the Jewish nation, that, contrariwise, it gives me continual pain and uneasiness, insomuch that, as Moses formerly (when God proposed to cut them off, and in their stead to make *him* a great nation, **#Ex 32:10**) begged that he himself should rather die than that the children of Israel should be destroyed, **#Ex 32:32**, so I could even wish that the exclusion from the visible Church, which will happen to the Jewish nation, might fall to my own share, if hereby *they* might be kept in it and to this I am inclined by natural affection, for the Jews are my dear brethren and kindred.

Very few passages in the New Testament have puzzled critics and commentators more than this. Every person saw the perfect absurdity of understanding it in a literal sense, as no man in his right mind could wish himself eternally damned in order to save another, or to save even the whole world. And the supposition that such an effect could be produced by such a sacrifice, was equally absurd and monstrous. Therefore various translations have been made of the place, and different solutions offered. Mr. Wakefield says: "I see no method of solving the difficulty in this verse, which has so exercised the learning and ingenuity of commentators, but by the *ευχομαι ειναι* of Homer, *I profess myself to be*; and he translates the passage in a parenthesis, thus: (*for I also was once an alien from Christ*) *on account of my brethren*, &c. But how it does appear that Saul of Tarsus was ever an alien from Christ *on account of his kinsmen*, is to me perfectly indiscernible. Let us examine the Greek text. *ηυχομην γαρ αυτος εγω αναθημα ειναι απο του χριστου υπερ των αδελφων μου*, 'For I did wish myself to be an anathema FROM Christ (υπο, BY Christ, as some ancient MSS. read) for my brethren.' As *ηυχομην* is the 1st per. sing. of the imperfect tense, some have been led to think that St. Paul is here mentioning what *had* passed through his own mind when filled with the love of God, he learned the rejection of the Jews; and that he only mentions it here as a thing which, in the effusions of his loving zeal, had been felt by him inconsiderately, and without any Divine afflatus leading him to it; but that he does not intimate that *now* he felt any such unreasonable and preposterous wish." I am afraid this is but ill calculated to solve the difficulty.

The Greek word *αναθημα*, *anathema*, properly signifies any thing devoted to God, so as to be destroyed: it answers to the Hebrew *חֶרֶם* *cherem*, which the Septuagint translate by it, and means either a *thing* or *person separated from its former state or condition, and devoted to destruction*. In this sense it is used, **#De 7:25, 26; #Jos 6:17, 18; 7:12**.

It is certain that the word, both among the Hebrews and Greeks, was used to express a person *devoted to destruction for the public safety*. In *Midrash hanneelam*, in *Sohar Chadash*, fol. 15, Rabbi Chaijah the elder said: "There is no shepherd found like unto Moses, who was willing to lay down his life for the sheep; for Moses said, **#Ex 32:32**, If thou wilt not pardon their sin, blot me, I

pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Such anathemas, or *persons* devoted to destruction for the public good, were common among all ancient nations. See the case of *M. Curtius* and *Decius* among the Romans. When a plague took place, or any public calamity, it was customary to take one of the lowest or most execrable of the people, and devote him to the *Dii Manes* or *infernal gods*. See proofs in *Schleusner*, and see the observations at the end of the chapter. This one circumstance is sufficient to explain the word in this place. Paul desired to be devoted to destruction, as the Jews then were, in order to redeem his countrymen from this most terrible excision. He was willing to become a sacrifice for the public safety, and to give his life to redeem theirs. And, as Christ may be considered as devoting them to destruction, (see Matt. 24,) Paul is willing that in their place Christ should devote him: *for I could wish myself, ἀναθεμα εἶμαι ἀπο* (or, as some excellent MSS. have it, *ὑπο*) *τοῦ χριστοῦ, to be devoted BY Christ, to that temporal destruction to which he has adjudged the disobedient Jews, if by doing so I might redeem them. This, and this alone, seems to be the meaning of the apostle's wish.*

**Verse 4. Who are Israelites]** Descendants of Jacob, a man so highly favoured of God, and from whom he received his name *Israel-a prince of God*, #Ge 32:28; from which name his descendants were called *Israelites*, and separated unto God for his glory and praise. Their very name of *Israelites* implied their very high dignity; they were a *royal nation*; *princes of the most high God*.

**The adoption]** The Israelites were all taken into the *family* of God, and were called his *sons* and *first-born*, #Ex 4:22; #De 14:1; #Jer 31:9; #Ho 11:1; and this adoption took place when God made the covenant with them at Horeb.

**The glory]** The manifestation of God among them; principally by the *cloud* and *pillar*, and the *Shekinah*, or Divine presence, appearing between the cherubim over the mercy-seat. These were peculiar to the Jews; no other nation was ever thus favoured.

**The covenants]** The covenants made with Abraham, both that which relates to the *spiritual seed*, and that which was peculiar to his *natural descendants*, #Ga 3:16, 17; which covenants were afterwards renewed by Moses, #De 29:1. Some suppose that the *singular* is here put for the plural, and that by *covenants* we are to understand the *decatalogue*, which is termed בְּרִית *berith*, or *covenant*, #De 4:13. But it is more likely that the apostle alludes to the great *covenant* made with Abraham, and to its various *renewals* and *extensions* at different times afterwards, as well as to its twofold design-the grant of the *land of Canaan*, and the *rest* that remains for the people of God.

**The giving of the law]** The revelation of God by God himself, containing a system of moral and political precepts. This was also peculiar to the Jews; for to no other nation had he ever given a revelation of his will.

**The service]** λατρεία. The particular ordinances, rites, and ceremonies of their religious worship, and especially the sacrificial system, so expressive of the sinfulness of sin and the holiness of God.

**The promises]** The land of Canaan, and the blessings of the Messiah and his kingdom; which promises had been made and often repeated to the patriarchs and to the prophets.

Verse 5. **Whose are the fathers]** Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the twelve patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, &c., &c., without controversy, the greatest and most eminent men that ever flourished under heaven. From these, is an uninterrupted and unpolluted line, the *Jewish people* had descended; and it was no small glory to be able to reckon, in their genealogy, persons of such incomparable merit and excellency.

**And of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came]** These ancestors were the more renowned, as being the *progenitors* of the *human nature* of the MESSIAH. Christ, the Messiah, *κατα σαρκα*, *according to the flesh*, sprang from them. But this Messiah was more than man, he is *God over all*; the very Being who gave them being, though he appeared to receive a being from *them*.

Here the apostle most distinctly points out the *twofold* nature of our Lord-his *eternal Godhead* and his *humanity*; and all the transpositions of *particles*, and alterations of *points* in the universe, will not explain away this doctrine. As this verse contains such an eminent proof of the deity of Christ, no wonder that the opposers of his divinity should strive with their utmost skill and cunning to destroy its force. And it must be truly painful to a mind that has nothing in view but *truth*, to see the mean and hypocritical methods used to elude the force of this text. Few have met it in that honest and manly way in which Dr. Taylor, who was a conscientious Arian, has considered the subject. "Christ," says he, "is *God over all*, as he is by the Father appointed *Lord, King, and Governor of all*. The *Father hath committed all judgement to the Son*, #Joh 5:22; has given *all things into his hands*, #Mt 28:18; he is *Lord of all*, #Ac 10:36. *God has given him a name above every name*, #Php 2:9; *above every name that is named*, not only in this world, but also in *that which is to come*; and has put *all things* (himself excepted, #1Co 15:27) *under his feet* and given him *to be head over all things*, #Eph 1:21, 22. This is our Lord's supreme Godhead. And that he is *ευλογητος*, *blessed for ever*, or the object of *everlasting blessing*, is evident from #Re 5:12, 13: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power-and blessing and honour be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*. Thus it appears the words may be justly applied to our blessed Lord." Notes, p. 329. Yes, and when we take *other scriptures* into the account, where his *essential Godhead* is particularly expressed, such as #Col 1:16, 17: *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created BY him, and FOR him: and he is BEFORE all things, and BY him do all things consist*; we shall find that he is not *God* by investiture or office, but properly and essentially such; for it is impossible to convey in human language, to human apprehension, a more complete and finished display of *what is essential to Godhead*, indivisible from it, and incommunicable to any created nature, than what is contained in the above verses. And while these words are allowed to make a part of Divine revelation, the *essential Godhead* of Jesus Christ will continue to be a doctrine of that revelation.

I pass by the groundless and endless conjectures about reversing some of the particles and placing points in different positions, as they have been all invented to get rid of the doctrine of Christ's divinity, which is so obviously acknowledged by the simple text; it is enough to state that there is *no omission* of these important words in any MS. or *version* yet discovered.

Verse 6. **Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.]** A Jew might have objected, as in #Ro 3:3: "Is not God bound by his faithfulness to continue the Jews as his peculiar Church and

people, notwithstanding the infidelity of the major part of them? If they are brought to a level with the Gentiles, will it not follow that God hath failed in the performance of his promise to Abraham? **#Ge 17:7, 8:** *I will establish my covenant between me and thee for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee.*" To which it may be answered: This awful dispensation of God towards the Jews is not inconsistent with the veracity of the Divine promise; for even the whole body of natural born Jews are not the whole of the Israelites comprehended in the promise. Abraham is the father of *many* nations; and his seed is not only that which is of the *law*, but that also which is of the *faith of Abraham*, **#Ro 4:16, 17.** The *Gentiles* were included in the Abrahamic covenant as well as the *Jews*; and therefore the Jews have no *exclusive* right to the blessings of God's kingdom.

Verse 7. **Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, &c.]** Nor can they conclude, because they are the natural descendants of Abraham, that therefore they are all of them, without exception, the *children* in whom the promise is to be fulfilled.

**But, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.]** The promise is not confined to immediate *natural descent*, but may be accomplished in any part of Abraham's posterity. For Abraham had several sons besides *Isaac*, **#Ge 25:1, 2**, particularly *Ishmael*, who was circumcised before *Isaac* was born, and in whom Abraham was desirous that the *promise* should be fulfilled, **#Ge 17:18**, and in him God might have fulfilled the promise, had he so pleased; and yet he said to Abraham, **#Ge 21:12:** Not in *Ishmael*, but in *Isaac*, *shall thy seed be called.*

Verse 8. **That is, They which are the children of the flesh]** Whence it appears that not the children who descend from Abraham's loins, nor those who were circumcised as he was, nor even those whom he might expect and desire, are *therefore* the Church and people of God; but those who are made children by the good pleasure and promise of God, as *Isaac* was, are alone to be accounted for the seed with whom the covenant was established.

Verse 9. **For this is the word of promise, &c.]** That is, this is evidently implied in the promise recorded **#Ge 18:10:** *At this time I will come*, saith God, and exert my Divine power, and *Sarah*, though fourscore and ten years old, *shall have a son*; which shows that it is the sovereign will and act of God alone, which singles out and constitutes the *peculiar seed* that was to inherit the promise made to Abraham.

It should be considered that the apostle, in this and the following quotations, does not give us the whole of the text which he intends should be taken into his argument, but only a *hint* or reference to the passages to which they belong; directing us to recollect or peruse the whole passage, and there view and judge of the argument.

That he is so to be understood appears from the conclusion he draws, **#Ro 9:16:** *So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.* In his arguments, **#Ro 9:7, 8**, &c., he says not one word of Abraham's *willing* Ishmael to be the seed in whom the promise might be fulfilled; nor of Isaac's *willing* Esau; nor of Moses' *willing* and interceding that the Israelites might be spared; nor of Esau's *running* for venison; but by introducing these particulars into his *conclusion*, he gives us to understand that his quotations are to be taken in connection with the whole story, of which they are a part; and without this the apostle's meaning cannot be apprehended.

The same may be said of his conclusion, **#Ro 9:18**: *Whom he will he hardeneth*: *hardeneth* is not in his argument, but it is in the *conclusion*. Therefore hardening is understood in the argument, and he evidently refers to the case of Pharaoh. The generality of the Jews were well acquainted with the Scripture, and a hint was sufficient to revive the memory of a whole passage. -Taylor, p. 330.

Verse 10. **And not only this]** A Jew might object: "Ishmael was rejected, not by the sovereign will of God, but because he was the son of the *handmaid*, or *bond-woman*, and therefore unworthy to be the peculiar seed; but observe, this was not the only limitation of the seed of Abraham with regard to inheriting the promise, for when Rebecca was with child by that one person of Abraham's issue to whom the promise was made, namely, our father Isaac, she went to inquire of the Lord, **#Ge 25:22, 23**: *And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of PEOPLE shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one PEOPLE shall be stronger than the other PEOPLE; and the elder shall serve the younger*. That is, the posterity of the *younger* shall be a nation much more prosperous and happy than the posterity of the *elder*.

Verse 11. **For the children being not yet born]** As the word *children* is not in the text, the word *nations* would be more proper; for it is of *nations* that the apostle speaks, as the following verses show, as well as the history to which he refers.

**Neither having done any good]** To merit the distinction of being made the peculiar people of God; *nor evil*, to deserve to be left out of this covenant, and the distinguishing national blessings which it conferred; *that the purpose of God according to election might stand*-that such distinctions might appear to depend on nothing but God's free choice, not *of works*, or any desert in the *people* or *nations* thus chosen; but of the mere purpose *of him who calleth* any people he pleases, to make them the depositories of his especial blessings, and thus to distinguish them from all others.

Verse 12. **The elder shall serve the younger]** These words, with those of Malachi, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, are cited by the apostle to prove, according to their typical signification, that the *purpose of God, according to election*, does and will stand, not *of works*, but *of him that calleth*; that is, that the *purpose of God*, which is the ground of that *election* which he makes among men, unto the honour of being Abraham's seed, might appear to remain unchangeable in him; and to be even the *same* which he had declared unto Abraham. That these words are used in a *national* and not in a *personal* sense, is evident from this: that, taken in the latter sense they are *not true*, for *Jacob* never did exercise any power over *Esau*, nor was *Esau* ever *subject* to him. *Jacob*, on the contrary, was rather subject to *Esau*, and was sorely afraid of him; and, first, by his messengers, and afterwards personally, acknowledged his brother to be his *lord*, and himself to be his *servant*; see **#Ge 32:4; 33:8, 13**. And hence it appears that neither *Esau* nor *Jacob*, nor even *their posterities*, are brought here by the apostle as instances of any *personal reprobation* from eternity: for, it is very certain that very many, if not the far *greatest part*, of *Jacob's* posterity were *wicked*, and rejected by God; and it is not less certain that some of *Esau's* posterity were partakers of the faith of their father Abraham.

From these premises the true sense of the words immediately following, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, **#Mal 1:2, 3**, fully appears; that is, that what he had already cited from Moses concerning the two nations, styled by the names of their respective heads, *Jacob* and *Esau*, was but

the same in substance with what was spoken many years after by the Prophet Malachi. The unthankful Jews had, in Malachi's time, either in words or in their heart, expostulated with God, and demanded of him wherein he had loved them? *I have loved you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?* #Mal 1:2-5. To this the Lord answers: *Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.*

1. It incontestably appears from these passages that the prophet does not speak at all of the *person* of Jacob or Esau, but of their respective *posterities*. For it was not Esau in person that said, *We are impoverished*; neither were his *mountains* nor *heritage* laid waste. Now, if the *prophet* speaks neither of the person of the one nor of the person of the other, but of their *posterity* only, then it is evident that the *apostle* speaks of them in the *same* way.

2. If neither the *prophet* nor the *apostle* speaks of the *persons* of Jacob or Esau, but of their *posterity*, then it is evident that neither the *love of God to Jacob*, nor the *hatred of God to Esau*, were such, according to which the eternal states of men, either in happiness or misery, are to be determined; nor is there here any Scriptural or rational ground for the decree of unconditional personal election and reprobation, which, comparatively, modern times have endeavoured to build on these scriptures. For, 1. It is here proved that *Esau* is not mentioned under any *personal* consideration, but only as the *head* of his *posterity*. 2. The testimony of Scripture amply proves that all *Esau's posterity* were not, even in this sense, reprobated; nor all *Jacob's posterity* elected. 3. Neither does that *service*, or subjugation to Jacob, which the Divine oracle imposed on Esau, import any such *reprobation* as some contend for; as the *servant* may be *elected*, while the *master* himself is in a state of *reprobation*. 4. Were it even granted that *servitude* did import such a *reprobation*, yet it is certain that Esau, in person, never did *serve* Jacob. 5. Nor does the *hatred* of God against Esau import any such reprobation of the person of Esau, because it is demonstrable that it related, not to Esau *personally*, but to his *posterity*. 6. The scope of the apostle's reasoning is to show that God is the sovereign of his own ways, has a right to dispense his blessings as he chooses, and to give salvation to mankind, not in the ways of their devising, but in that way that is most suitable to his infinite wisdom and goodness.

Therefore, 1. He chose the Jewish people from all others, and revealed himself to them. Thus *they* were the *elect*, and all the *nations* of mankind *reprobate*. 2. When the fulness of the time came he revealed himself also to the *Gentiles*, who gladly received the Gospel: and the *Jews* rejecting it, were *cast off*. Thus the *elect* became *reprobate*, and the *reprobate*, *elect*. 3. He published to all mankind that the pardon of sin could and should be obtained ONLY by *faith in his Son Jesus*, and not by any *obedience to any law*. And the Jews, the descendants of Jacob, who rejected this way of salvation, became precisely like the *Edomites*, the descendants of Esau; *they builded, but God pulled down; their mountains and heritage are NOW laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness; and they properly may now be called the border of wickedness, a people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever*: they have rejected the Lord that bought them, and so have brought upon themselves swift destruction. 7. That no *personal*, absolute, eternal reprobation of Esau can have



been intended, we learn from this; that he was most amply *reconciled* to his brother, who had so deeply wronged and offended him, by depriving him of his birthright and his blessing: and his having forgiven his brother his trespasses, was no mean proof that God had forgiven him. See our Lord's words, #Mt 6:14. Therefore there can be assigned no competent ground of his damnation, much less of his *personal* reprobation from all eternity. 8. And were such a *personal* reprobation intended, is it not shocking to suppose that the God of endless mercy, in whose sight his pious parents had found favour, should inform *them*, even *before their child was born*, that he had *absolutely consigned him, by an irrevocable decree to eternal damnation*? A message of such horrid import coming immediately from the mouth of God, to a tender, weak, and delicate woman, whose hour of travail with two children was just at hand, could not have failed to produce abortion, and destroy her life. But the parents perfectly understood their God, and saw no decree of reprobation in his *message; two manner of nations are in thy womb-and the elder shall serve the younger*. 9. There is no *reason*, worthy the most wise and gracious God, why he should make known to the world such a thing concerning *Esau*, who was yet unborn, that he had reprobated him from all eternity. Such a revelation could be of no spiritual advantage or edification to mankind, but rather of a malignant influence, as directly occasioning men to judge hardly of their Maker, and to conceive of him as no faithful Creator; as having no care, no love, no bowels of compassion towards the workmanship of his own hands. See *Goodwin's Exposition*: and see my *notes* on Gen. 27.

Verse 14. **What shall we say then?**] To what conclusion shall we come on the facts before us? Shall we suggest that God's bestowing peculiar privileges in this unequal manner, on those who otherwise are in equal circumstances, is inconsistent with *justice* and *equity*? *By no means*. Whatever God does is *right*, and he may dispense his blessings to *whom* and or what *terms* he pleases.

Verse 15. **For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy, &c.**] The words of God to Moses, #Ex 33:19, show that God has a right to dispense his blessings as he pleases; for, after he had declared that he would spare the Jews of old, and continue them in the relation of his peculiar people, when they had deserved to have been cut off for their idolatry, he said: *I will make all my goodness pass before thee; and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*. As if he had said: I will make such a display of my perfections as shall convince you that my nature is kind and beneficent; but know, that I am a debtor to none of my creatures. My benefits and blessings are merely from my own good will: nor can *any people*, much less a *rebellious* people, challenge them as their due in justice or equity. And therefore I now spare the Jews; not because either you, who intercede for them or they themselves have any *claim* upon my favour, but of my own free and sovereign grace I choose to show them mercy and compassion. I will give my salvation in my own way and on my own terms. He that believeth on my Son Jesus shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned. This is God's ultimate design; this purpose he will never change; and this he has fully declared in the *everlasting Gospel*. This is the grand DECREE of *reprobation* and *election*.

Verse 16. **So then it is not of him that willeth, &c.**] I conclude, therefore, from these several instances, that the making or continuing any body of men the peculiar people of God, is righteously determined; not by the *judgment, hopes, or wishes* of men, but by the *will* and *wisdom* of God alone. For Abraham judged that the blessing ought, and he *willed*, desired, that it might be given to

*Ishmael*; and Isaac also *willed*, designed, it for his first-born, *Esau*: and Esau, *wishing* and hoping that it might be his, *readily* went, *ran* a hunting for venison, that he might have the blessing regularly conveyed to him: but they were all disappointed-Abraham and Isaac, who *willed*, and Esau who *ran*: for God had originally intended that the blessing of being a great nation and distinguished people should, of his mere good pleasure, be given to Isaac and Jacob, and be confirmed in their posterity; and to them it was given. And when by their apostasy they had forfeited this privilege, it was not Moses' *willing*, nor any prior obligation God was under, but his own sovereign mercy, which *continued* it to them.

Verse 17. **For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh]** Instead of showing the Israelites mercy he might justly have suffered them to have gone on in sin, till he should have signalized his wisdom and justice in their destruction; as appears from what God in his word declares concerning his dealings with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, **#Ex 9:15, 16:** *For now, saith the Lord, I had stretched forth my hand, (in the plague of boils and blains,) and I had smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence; and thou hadst (by this plague) been cut off from the earth; (as thy cattle were by the murrain;) but in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up-I have restored thee to health by removing the boils and blains, and by respiting thy deserved destruction to a longer day, that I may, in thy instance, give such a demonstration of my power in thy final overthrow, that all mankind may learn that I am God, the righteous Judge of all the earth, the avenger of wickedness. See this translation of the original vindicated in my notes on #Ex 9:15, 16; and, about the hardening of Pharaoh, see the notes on those places where the words occur in the same book.*

Verse 18. **Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will]** This is the apostle's conclusion from the facts already laid down: that God, according to his own will and wisdom, in perfect righteousness, bestows *mercy*; that is to say, his blessings upon one part of mankind, (the Jews of old, and the Gentiles of the present time,) while he suffers another part (the *Egyptians* of old, and the *Jews* of the present day) to go on in the abuse of his goodness and forbearance, hardening themselves in sin, till he brings upon them a most just and exemplary punishment, unless this be prevented by their deep repentance and general return to God through Jesus the promised, the real *Messiah*.

Verse 19. **Why doth he yet find fault?]** The apostle here introduces the Jew making an objection similar to that in **#Ro 3:7:** *If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, that is, if God's faithfulness is glorified by my wickedness, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? Why am I condemned for that which brings so much glory to him? The question here is: If God's glory be so highly promoted and manifested by our obstinacy, and he suffers us to proceed in our hardness and infidelity, why does he find fault with us, or punish us for that which is according to his good pleasure?*

Verse 20. **Nay but, O man, who art thou]** As if he had said: Weak, ignorant man, darest thou retort on the infinitely good and righteous GOD? Reflect on *thyself*; and tell me, after thou hast abused the grace of God, and transgressed his laws, wilt thou cavil at his dispensations? God hath *made, created, formed* the *Jewish* nation; and shall the thing *formed*, when it hath *corrupted* itself, pretend to correct the wise and gracious Author of its being, and say, *Why hast thou made me thus? Why hast thou constituted me in this manner? Thou hast done me wrong in giving me my being under such and such conditions.*

Old John Goodwin's note on this passage is at least curious: "I scarce (says he) know any passage of the Scripture more frequently abused than this. When men, in the great questions of predestination and reprobation, bring forth any text of Scripture which they conceive makes for their notion, though the sense which they put upon it be ever so uncouth and dissonant from the true meaning of the Holy Ghost, yet, if any man contradict, they frequently fall upon him with-*Nay but, O man; who art thou?* As if St. Paul had left them his heirs and successors in the infallibility of his spirit! But when men shall call a solid answer to their groundless conceits about the meaning of the Scriptures, *a replying against God*, it savours more of the spirit who was seen falling like lightning from heaven, than of His, who saw him in this his fall."

Verse 21. **Hath not the potter power over the clay]** The apostle continues his answer to the Jew. Hath not God shown, by the parable of the potter, #**Jer 18:1**, &c., that he may justly dispose of nations, and of the Jews in particular, according as he in his infinite wisdom may judge most right and fitting; even as the potter has a right, out of the same lump of clay, to make one vessel to a more *honourable* and another to a *less honourable* use, as his own judgment and skill may direct; for no potter will take pains to make a vessel merely that he may show that he has power to dash it to pieces? *For the word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work upon the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.* It was not fit for the more honourable place in the mansion, and therefore he made it for a less honourable place, but as necessary for the master's use there, as it could have been in a more honourable situation. *Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation-to build and to plant it; is it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.* The reference to this parable shows most positively that the apostle is speaking of men, not *individually*, but *nationally*; and it is strange that men should have given his words any other application with this scripture before their eyes.

Verse 22. **What if God, willing to show his wrath]** The apostle refers here to the case of *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*, and to which he applies Jeremiah's parable of the potter, and, from them, to the then state of the Jews. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were *vessels of wrath*-persons deeply guilty before God; and by their obstinate refusal of his grace, and abuse of his goodness, they had fitted themselves for that destruction which the *wrath*, the vindictive justice of God, inflicted, after he had *endured* their obstinate rebellion *with much long-suffering*; which is a most absolute proof that the hardening of their hearts, and their ultimate punishment, were the consequences of their obstinate refusal of his grace and abuse of his goodness; as the history in Exodus sufficiently shows. As the Jews of the apostle's time had sinned after the similitude of the Egyptians, hardening their hearts and abusing his goodness, after every display of his long-suffering kindness, being now fitted for destruction, they were ripe for punishment; and that *power*, which God was *making known* for their salvation, having been so long and so much abused and provoked, was now about to show itself in their destruction as a nation. But even in this case there is not a word of their *final damnation*; much

less that either *they* or any *others* were, by a sovereign decree, reprobated from all eternity; and that their very sins, the proximate cause of their punishment, were the necessary effect of that decree which had from all eternity doomed them to endless torments. As such a doctrine could never come from God, so it never can be found in the words of his apostle.

Verse 23. **And that he might make known]** God endured with much long-suffering the *vessels of wrath*: 1. To *show his wrath*, and to make his power known. And also, 2. That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy.

**Which he had afore prepared unto glory]** The Jews were fitted for destruction long before; but the fittest time to destroy them was after he had prepared the believing Gentiles unto glory. For the rod of the Messiah's strength was to be sent out of Zion, **#Ps 110:2**. The Jewish nation was to supply the first preachers of the Gospel, and from Jerusalem their sound was to go forth into all the earth. Therefore the Jewish state, notwithstanding its corruptions, was to be preserved till the Messiah came, and even till the Gospel preached by the apostles had taken deep root in the Gentile world. Another thing which rendered the time when the Jewish polity was overthrown the most proper, was this, because then the immediate occasion of it was the extensiveness of the Divine grace. They would not have the Gentiles admitted into the Church of God; but contradicted, and blasphemed, and rejected the Lord that bought them: thus, then, the extensiveness of the Divine grace occasioned their infidelity, **#Ro 9:33; 10:3; 11:11, 12, 15, 28, 30**. Thus the Jews were *diminished* by that *abundance of grace* which has *enriched* the Gentiles. And so the grace of God was illustrated; or, so God *made known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy*-the apostles and primitive believers among the Jews, and the *Gentile world*, which received the Gospel by the preaching of the apostles and their successors.

Verse 24. **Even us, whom he hath called]** All the Jews and Gentiles who have been invited by the preaching of the Gospel to receive justification by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have come to the *Gospel feast* on this invitation.

Verse 25. **As he saith also in Osee]** It is a cause of not a little confusion, that a uniformity in the orthography of the proper names of the Old and New Testaments has not been preserved. What *stranger* to our sacred books would suppose that the *Osee* above meant the Prophet *Hosea*, from whom, **#Ho 2:23**, this quotation is taken: *I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people*. The apostle shows that this calling of the Gentiles was no *fortuitous* thing, but a *firm purpose* in the Divine mind, which he had largely revealed to the prophets; and by opposing the calling of the Gentiles, the Jews in effect renounced their *prophets*, and fought against God.

Verse 26. **And it shall come to pass, &c.]** These quotations are taken out of Hosea, **#Ho 1:10**, where (immediately after God had rejected the *ten tribes, or kingdom of Israel*, **#Ho 1:9**, then saith God, *Call his name Lo-ammi; for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God*;) he adds, *yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered: and it shall come to pass, that in the place in which it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God*. As if he had said: The decrease of numbers in the Church, by God's utterly taking away the *ten tribes*, (**#Ho 1:6**;) shall be

well supplied by what shall afterwards come to pass, by calling the *Gentiles* into it. They, the rejected Jews, which had been the people of God, should become a *Lo-ammi-not my people*. On the contrary, they, the *Gentiles*, who had been a *Lo-ammi-not my people*, should become the *children of the living God*. Again, **#Ho 2:23**: *I will sow her* (the Jewish Church) *unto me in the earth*, (alluding probably to the *dispersion* of the Jews over all the *Roman* empire; which proved a fruitful cause of preparing the Gentiles for the reception of the Gospel,) *and, or moreover, I will have mercy upon her*, the body of the believing Gentiles, *that had not obtained mercy*. See Taylor.

Verse 27. **Esaias also crieth]** The apostle pursues his argument, which had for its object the proof that God, for their infidelity, had rejected the great body of the Jews, and that but a few of them would embrace the Gospel, and be saved from that besom of destruction which was now coming to sweep them and their state away. Dr. Taylor paraphrases this and the following verses thus: And that but a small remnant of the Jews shall now be taken into the Church, is agreeable to former dispensations; for the Prophet Isaiah expressly declares concerning the Israelites, **#Isa 10:22, 23**: *Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea*, (for the promise to Abraham has been amply fulfilled,) *only a remnant shall be saved; the consumption decreed shall overflow in righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined in the midst of all the land*.

Verse 28. **For he will finish the work, and cut it short, &c.]** These appear to be forensic terms, and refer to the *conclusion* of a *judicial proceeding*; the Lord has *tried* and *found them guilty*, and will *immediately execute* upon them the punishment due to their transgressions.

Verse 29. **And as Esaias said before]** What God designs to do with the Jews at present, because of their obstinacy and rebellion, is similar to what he has done before, to which the same prophet refers, **#Isa 1:9**: *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah*: i.e. had not God, who commands and overrules all the powers in heaven and earth, in mercy preserved a very small remnant, to keep up the name and being of the nation, it had been quite cut off and extinct, as Sodom and Gomorrah were. Thus we learn that it is no new thing with God to abandon the greatest part of the Jewish nation, when corrupt, and to confine his favour and blessing to a righteous, believing few.

Instead of *remnant*, שְׂרִיד *sarid*, both the *Septuagint* and the *apostle* have σπέρμα, a *seed*, intimating that there were left just enough of the righteous to be a *seed* for a future *harvest* of true believers. So the *godly* were not destroyed from the land; some remained, and the harvest was in the days of the apostles.

Verse 30. **What shall we say then?]** What is the final conclusion to be drawn from all these prophecies, facts, and reasonings? This: That *the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness*, &c. This, with the succeeding verses, together with what belongs to the same subject in the beginning of the following chapter, I have explained at large in the notes on **#Ro 1:17**, to which I must refer the reader; and shall content myself in this place with Dr. Taylor's general paraphrase. We may suppose the apostle to express himself to the following effect. Thus I have vindicated the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, with regard to the Divine veracity and justice. Now let us turn our thoughts to the true reason and state of the affair considered in *itself*. And, in

the first place, what just notion ought we to have of the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews? I answer: The true notion of the calling or inviting of the Gentiles is this: whereas they had no apprehension of being reinstated in the privileges of God's peculiar kingdom, and consequently used no endeavours to obtain that blessing, yet, notwithstanding, they have attained to justification, *to the remission of sins*, and the privileges of God's people: not on account of their *prior worthiness and obedience*, but purely by the *grace and mercy of God*, received by *faith* on their part. And so, by embracing the scheme of life published by the Gospel, they are adopted into the family and Church of God. Thus the Gentiles are *called or invited*.

Verse 31. **But Israel, which followed after]** But the *Jews*, who have hitherto been the people of God, though they have been industrious in observing a *rule* by which they supposed they could secure the blessings of God's peculiar kingdom, yet have not come up to the *true and only rule* by which those blessings can be secured.

Verse 32. **Wherefore?]** And where lies their mistake? *Being ignorant of God's righteousness*-of his method of saving sinners by faith in Christ, *they went about to establish their own righteousness*-their own method of obtaining everlasting salvation. They attend not to the *Abrahamic covenant*, which stands on the extensive principles of *grace* and *faith*; but they turn all their regards to the *law of Moses*. They imagine that their obedience to that law gives them a right to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. But, finding that the Gospel sets our special interest in God and the privileges of his Church on a different footing, they are offended, and refuse to come into it.

Verse 33. **As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion]** Christ, the Messiah, is become a stone of stumbling to them: and thus what is written in the prophecy of Isaiah is verified in their case, **#Isa 8:14; 28:16: Behold, I lay in Sion**, i.e. I shall bring in my Messiah; but he shall be a widely different person from him whom the Jews expect; for, whereas they expect the Messiah to be a *mighty secular prince*, and to set up a *secular kingdom*, he shall appear a *man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs*; and redeem mankind, not by his *sword or secular power*, but by his *humiliation, passion, and death*. Therefore they will be *offended* at him and reject him, and think it would be *reproachful* to trust in such a person for salvation.

**And whosoever believeth on him]** But so far shall any be from *confusion or disappointment* who believes in Christ; that on the contrary, every genuine believer shall find salvation-the remission of sins here, and eternal glory hereafter. See the notes on **#Ro 1:16, 17**, and Dr. Taylor's paraphrase and notes.

1. ON the subject of vicarious punishment, or rather the case of one becoming an *anathema* or sacrifice for the public good, in illustration of **#Ro 9:3**, I shall make no apology for the following extracts, taken from an author whose learning is vast, and whose piety is unblemished.

"When mankind lost sight of a beneficent Creator, the God of purity, and consecrated altars to the sun, the moon, the stars; to demons; and to hero gods, under the names of Moloch, Ashtaroth and Baalim; these objects of their worship led them to the most horrid acts of cruelty, and to every species of obscenity; even their sons and their daughters they burnt in the fire to their gods, more especially in seasons of distress. Such was the conduct of the king of Moab; for, when he was

besieged in his capital, and expected he should fall into the hands of his enemies, he took his eldest son, who should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering on the wall.

With these facts thus related from the Scriptures, all accounts, ancient and modern, exactly correspond. Homer, who it must be recollected wrote more than nine hundred years before the Christian era, although he describes chiefly the common sacrifices of quadrupeds, yet gives one account of human victims. But in succeeding generations, when it was conceived that one great and most malignant spirit was the proper object of their fear, or that subordinate provincial gods, equally malignant, *nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda*, disposed of all things in our world, men bound their own species to the altar, and in circumstances of national distress presented such as they valued most, either their children or themselves. Herodotus informs us that, when the army of Xerxes came to the Strymon, the magi offered a sacrifice of white horses to that river. On his arrival at the Scamander, the king ascended the citadel of Priam; and having surveyed it, he ordered a thousand oxen to be sacrificed to the Trojan Minerva. But on other occasions he chose human victims; for we are informed that, when, having passed the Strymon, he reached the nine ways, he buried alive nine young men and as many virgins, natives of the country. In this he followed the example of his wife, for she commanded fourteen Persian children, of illustrious birth, to be offered in that manner to the deity who reigns beneath the earth. Thus, in the infancy of Rome we see Curtius, for the salvation of his country, devoting himself to the infernal gods, when, as it appears, an earthquake occasioned a deep and extensive chasm in the forum, and the augurs had declared that the portentous opening would never close until what contributed most to the strength and power of the Romans should be cast into it; but that by such a sacrifice they would obtain immortality for their republic. When all men were at a loss how to understand this oracle, M. Curtius, armed as for battle, presented himself in the forum, and explained it thus: 'What is more valuable to Rome than her courage and her arms?' So saying, he urged forward his impetuous steed, and buried himself in the abyss. His grateful countrymen admired his fortitude, and attributed the increasing splendour of their state to the sacrifice he made. Animated by this example, Decius, in the war between Rome and Latium, having solemnly offered himself as an expiatory sacrifice, rushed single into the thickest ranks of the astonished Latins, that by his death he might appease the anger of the gods, transfer their indignation to the enemy, and secure the victory to Rome. *Conspectus ab utroque acie aliquanto augustior humano visu, sicut Cælo missus, piaculum omnis deorum iræ, qui pestem ab suis aversam in hostes ferret.*

Here we see distinctly marked the notion of vicarious suffering, and the opinion that the punishment of guilt may be transferred from the guilty to the innocent. The gods call for sacrifice-the victim bleeds-atonement is made-and the wrath of the infernal powers falls in its full force upon the enemy. Thus, while Themistocles at Salamine was offering sacrifice, three captives, the sons of Sandance, and nephews to Xerxes, all distinguished for their beauty, elegantly dressed and decked, as became their birth, with ornaments of gold, being brought on board his galley, the augur, Euphrantides, observing at the very instant a bright flame ascending from the altar, whilst one was sneezing on the right, which he regarded as a propitious omen, he seized the hand of Themistocles, and commanded that they should all be sacrificed to Bacchus, (*ὠμῆσθῃ διονυσῶ*-cruel and relentless Bacchus! Homer has the same expression,) predicting, on this occasion, safety and conquests to the Greeks. Immediately the multitude with united voices called on the god, and led the captive princes to the altar, and compelled Themistocles to sacrifice them.



So when Æneas was to perform the last kind office for his friend Pallas, he sacrificed (besides numerous oxen, sheep, and swine) eight captives to the infernal gods. In this he followed the example of Achilles, who had caused twelve Trojans of high birth to bleed by the sacerdotal knife, over the ashes of his friend Patroclus.

A hundred feet in length, a hundred wide,  
The glowing structure spreads on every side,  
High on the top the manly course they lay,  
And well-fed sheep and sable oxen slay;  
Achilles covered with their fat the dead,  
And the piled victims round the body spread;  
Then jars of honey and of fragrant oil  
Suspend around, low bending o'er the pile.  
Four sprightly coursers with a deadly groan  
Pour forth their lives, and on the pyre are thrown  
Of nine large dogs, domestic at his board,  
Fell two, selected to attend their lord:  
The last of all, and horrible to tell,  
Sad sacrifice! twelve Trojan captives fell;  
On these the rage of fire victorious preys,  
Involves and joins them in one common blaze.  
Smeared with the bloody rites, he stands on high,  
And calls the spirit with a cheerful cry,  
All hail, Patroclus! let thy vengeful ghost  
Hear, and exult on Pluto's dreary coast.  
POPE'S *Homer*, IL. xxiii. ver. 203

How much was it to be lamented, that even civilized natures should forget the intention for which sacrifices were originally instituted! The bad effects, however, would not have been either so extensive or so great, had they not wholly lost the knowledge of Jehovah; and taken, as the object of their fear, that evil and apostate spirit whose name, with the utmost propriety is called Apollyon, or the destroyer, and whose worship has been universally diffused at different periods among all the nations of the earth.

The practice of shedding human blood before the altars of their gods was not peculiar to the *Trojans* and the *Greeks*; the Romans followed their example. In the first ages of their republic they sacrificed children to the goddess Mania; in later periods, numerous gladiators bled at the tombs of the patricians, to appease the manes of the deceased. And it is particularly noticed of Augustus, that, after the taking of *Perusia*, he sacrificed on the ides of March, three hundred senators and knights to the divinity of Julius Cæsar.

The *Carthaginians*, as Diodorus Siculus informs us, bound themselves by a solemn vow to Chronus that they would sacrifice to him children selected from the offspring of their nobles; but in process of time they substituted for these the children of their slaves, which practice they continued, till, being defeated by Agathocles, tyrant of Sicily, and attributing their disgrace to the anger of the

god, they offered two hundred children, taken from the most distinguished families in Carthage; besides which, three hundred citizens presented themselves, that by their voluntary death they might render the deity propitious to their country. The mode of sacrificing these children was horrid in the extreme, for they were cast into the arms of a brazen statue, and from thence dropped into a furnace, as was practised among the first inhabitants of Latium. It was probably in this manner the Ammonites offered up their children to Moloch. The *Pelasgi* at one time sacrificed a tenth part of all their children, in obedience to an oracle.

The *Egyptians*, in Heliopolis, sacrificed three men every day to Juno. The *Spartans* and *Arcadians* scourged to death young women; the latter to appease the wrath of Bacchus, the former to gratify Diana. The Sabian idolaters in *Persia* offered human victims to Mithras, the *Cretans* to Jupiter, the *Lacedemonians* and *Lusitanians* to Mars, the *Lesbians* to Bacchus, the *Phocians* to Diana, the *Thessalians* to Chiron.

The *Gauls*, equally cruel in their worship, sacrificed men, originally to Eso and Teutate, but latterly to Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva. Cæsar informs us that, whenever they thought themselves in danger, whether from sickness, or after any considerable defeat in war, being persuaded that unless life be given for life the anger of the gods can never be appeased, they constructed wicker images of enormous hulk, which they filled with men, who were first suffocated with smoke, and then consumed by fire. For this purpose they preferred criminals; but when a sufficient number of these could not be found, they supplied the deficiency from the community at large.

The *Germans* are said to have differed from the Gauls in having no druids, and in being little addicted to the service of the altar. Their only gods were the sun, Vulcan, and the moon; yet, among the objects of their worship was Tuisco their progenitor and Woden the hero of the north. It is true that neither Cæsar nor Tacitus say any thing of their shedding blood in sacrifice; yet the probability is, that, like the Saxons and other northern nations, they not only offered blood, but took their choicest victims from the human race.

In *Sweden* the altars of Woden smoked incessantly with blood: this flowed most abundantly at the solemn festivals celebrated every ninth year at Upsal. Then the king, attended by the senate and by all the great officers about his court, entered the temple, which glittered on all sides with gold, and conducted to the altar nine slaves, or in time of war nine captives. These met the caresses of the multitude, as being about to avert from them the displeasure of the gods, and then submitted to their fate: but in times of distress more noble victims bled; and it stands upon record that when Aune their king was ill, he offered up to Woden his nine sons, to obtain the prolongation of his life.

The *Danes* had precisely the same abominable customs. Every ninth year, in the month of January, they sacrificed ninety-nine men, with as many horses, dogs, and cocks; and Hacon, king of Norway, offered his own son to obtain from Woden the victory over Harold, with whom he was at war.

In *Russia* the Slavi worshipped a multitude of gods, and erected to them innumerable altars. Of these deities *Peroun*, that is, the thunderer, was the supreme, and before his image many of their

prisoners bled. Their god of physic, who also presided over the sacred fires, shared with him; and the great rivers, considered as gods, had their portion of human victims, whom they covered with their inexorable waves. But *Suetovid*, the god of war, was the god in whom they most delighted; to him they presented annually, as a burnt offering, three hundred prisoners, each on his horse; and when the whole was consumed by fire, the priests and people sat down to eat and drink till they were drunk. It is worthy of remark, that the residence of Suetovid was supposed to be in the sun.

To this luminary the *Peruvians*, before they were restrained by their Incas, sacrificed their children.

Among the sacred books of the Hindoos, the Ramayuna demands particular attention, because of its antiquity, the extent of country through which it is revered, and the view which it exhibits of the religion, doctrine, mythology, customs, and manners of their remote progenitors.

In this we have a golden age of short duration, succeeded by a state of universal wickedness and violence, which continued till the deity, incarnate, slew the oppressors of the human race, and thus restored the reign of piety and virtue.

This poem contains a description of the *Ushwamedha*, or most solemn sacrifice of the white horse, instituted by Swuymbhoo, that is, by the self-existent. At the celebration of this festival, the monarch, as the representative of the whole nation, acknowledged his transgressions; and when the offerings were consumed by the sacrificial fire, he was considered as perfectly absolved from his offences. Then follows a particular account of a human sacrifice, in which the victim, distinguished for filial piety, for resignation to his father's will, and for purity of heart, was bound by the king himself and delivered to the priest; but at the very instant when his blood was to have been shed, this illustrious youth was by miracle delivered; and the monarch, as the reward of his intended sacrifice, received virtue, prosperity, and fame.

It is well known that the Brahmins have in all ages had their human victims, and that even in our days thousands have voluntarily perished under the wheels of their god Jaghernaut."-*Townsend's character of Moses*, p. 76.

Though in the preceding notes I have endeavoured to make every point as clear and plain as possible; yet it may be necessary, in order to see the scope of the apostle's design more distinctly, to take a general survey of the whole. No man has written with more judgment on this epistle than Dr. Taylor, and from his notes I borrow the principal part of the following observations.

The principal thing that requires to be settled in this chapter is, what kind of *election* and *reprobation* the apostle is arguing about: whether *election*, by the *absolute decree* and purpose of God, to *eternal life*; and *reprobation*, by a like *absolute decree*, to *eternal misery*; or only *election* to the *present privileges and external advantages of the kingdom of God* in this world; and *reprobation*, or rejection, as it signifies the *not being favoured* with those *privileges and advantages*. I think it demonstrably clear that it is the latter election and rejection the apostle is discoursing on, and not the former; as the following considerations appear to me to demonstrate.

I. The subject of the apostle's argument is manifestly such privileges as are enumerated, **#Ro 9:4, 5**: *Who are Israelites, to whom pertains the adoption, &c.* From these privileges he supposes the Jews *had fallen, or would fall*; or, that for a *long time* they would be deprived of the benefit of them. For it is with regard to the *loss* of those privileges that he was so much concerned for his *brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, #Ro 9:2, 3*. And it is with reference to their being stripped of these privileges that he vindicates the word and righteousness of God, **#Ro 9:24**. *Not as though the word of God had taken no effect, or failed, &c.*; proving that God, according to his purpose of election, was free to confer them upon any branch of Abraham's family: consequently, those privileges were the singular blessings which by the *purpose of God according to election, not of works, but of him that calleth*, were conferred upon Jacob's posterity. But those privileges were only such as the *whole body of the Israelites* enjoyed in *this world*, while they were the Church and people of God, and such privileges as they might afterwards *lose*, or of which they might be *deprived*; therefore the election of Jacob's posterity to those privileges was not an absolute election to eternal life.

II. Agreeably to the *purpose of God according to election*, it was said unto Rebecca, *The elder shall serve the younger*, meaning the *posterity* of the elder and the younger; **#Ge 25:23**: *The Lord said unto her, two NATIONS are in thy womb, and two manner of PEOPLE shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one PEOPLE shall be stronger than the other PEOPLE; and the elder shall serve the younger*. These are the words which signify the *purpose of God according to election*: therefore the election refers to Jacob's *posterity*, or the *whole nation of Israel*. But all the nation of Israel were not absolutely elected to eternal life: therefore the purpose of God according to election referred to *temporal* and not to eternal blessings, and was a privilege of which they might be deprived.

III. Agreeably to the *purpose of God according to election*, it was said to Rebecca, *The elder shall serve the younger*; but to *serve*, in Scripture, never meant to *be eternally damned in the world to come*: consequently the opposite blessing, bestowed upon the posterity of the younger, could not be *eternal salvation*, but certain privileges in *this life*; therefore the purpose according to election refers to those privileges, and the *servitude* does not imply everlasting perdition.

IV. The *election* the apostle speaks of is not of works, **#Ro 9:11**, but of the *mere will of God*, who *calls and invites*, and refers to no *qualifications* in the persons thus *elected and called*. But in no part of the sacred writings is final salvation said to be given to any who are not *qualified by holiness* to receive and enjoy it; therefore election to *eternal glory* cannot be what the apostle speaks of in this epistle.

V. The *election* of which the apostle speaks took place, first in *Abraham* and his seed, before his seed was born; and then (secluding *Ishmael* and all his posterity) in *Isaac* and his seed before they were born. And then, secluding *Esau* and all his posterity, in *Jacob* and his seed before they were born. But the Scripture no where represents *eternal life* as bestowed upon any *family or race of men* in this manner; therefore this election mentioned by the apostle cannot be an election unto *eternal life*.

VI. *Vessels of mercy, #Ro 9:23*, are manifestly opposed to *vessels of wrath, #Ro 9:22*. *The vessels of mercy* are the *whole body of the Jews and Gentiles*, who were *called or invited* into the kingdom

of God under the Gospel, **#Ro 9:24**; consequently, the *vessels of wrath* are the *whole body of the unbelieving Jews*. So in **#Ro 9:30, 31**, the *whole body of believing Gentiles*, who, according to God's purpose of election, had attained justification, are opposed to the *whole body of the Israelites*, who came short of it. But men shall not be received into eternal life or subjected to eternal damnation at the last day in *collective bodies*, but according as *particular persons* in those bodies have acted *well or ill*; therefore, this election is not of these *particular bodies* unto eternal life, &c.

VII. Whoever carefully peruses the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters, will find that those who *have not believed*, **#Ro 11:31**, are the present rejected *Jews*, or that *Israel* to whom *blindness hath happened in part*, **#Ro 11:25**; the same who *fell*, and on whom God hath shown *severity*, **#Ro 11:22**; the same with the *natural branches* whom God spared not, **#Ro 11:21**; who were *broken off* from the olive tree, **#Ro 11:20, 19, 17**; who were *cast away*, **#Ro 11:15**; who were *diminished and fallen*, **#Ro 11:12**; who had *stumbled*, **#Ro 11:11**; who were a *disobedient and, gainsaying people*, **#Ro 10:21**; who, *being ignorant of God's righteousness, went about to establish their own*, **#Ro 10:3**; because they sought righteousness, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, **#Ro 9:32**, and therefore had not attained to the law of righteousness, **#Ro 9:31**; the same people spoken of in all these places, are the *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction*, **#Ro 9:22**, and the same for whom Paul had *great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart*, **#Ro 9:2, 3**; -in short, they are the unbelieving nation, or people of Israel; and it is with regard to the reprobation or rejection of this people that he is arguing and vindicating the truth, justice, and wisdom of God in this *ninth* chapter.

Now, if we turn back and review those three chapters, we shall find that the apostle, **#Ro 11:1**, heartily desired and prayed that those same reprobated and rejected people of Israel *might be saved*; he affirms that they had not *stumbled so as to fall* finally and irrecoverably, **#Ro 11:11**; that they should have again a *fulness*, **#Ro 11:12**; that they should be *received* again into the Church, **#Ro 11:16**; that a *holiness* still belonged to them, **#Ro 11:16**; that if they did not *still abide in unbelief*, they should be *grafted into their own olive tree* again, **#Ro 11:23, 24**; that *blindness* had *happened* unto them only for a time, *till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*, **#Ro 11:25**; and then he proves from Scripture, that *all Israel*-all those nations at present under *blindness*, shall be *saved*, **#Ro 11:26,27**; that, as touching the (original) *election*, *they were still beloved for the fathers'*, the patriarchs', *sake*, **#Ro 11:28**; that, in their case, *the gifts and calling of God were without repentance*, **#Ro 11:29**; that *through our* (the believing Gentiles') *mercy*, *they shall at length obtain mercy*, **#Ro 11:31**. All these several things are spoken of that *Israel*, or the body of people concerning whose rejection the apostle argues in the *ninth* chapter. And therefore the rejection which he there argues about cannot be *absolute reprobation to eternal damnation*, but to their being, as a nation, *stripped of those honours and privileges of God's peculiar Church and kingdom in this world*, to which, at a certain future period, they shall again be restored.

VIII. Once more: whoever carefully peruses those three chapters will find that the people who in *times past believed not God*, but have NOW *obtained mercy through the unbelief of the Jews*, **#Ro 11:30**, are the whole body of the believing Gentiles; the same who were *cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature*, and were *grafted, contrary to nature, into the good olive tree*, **#Ro 11:24, 17**; the same to whom God hath shown *goodness*, **#Ro 11:22**; the WORLD that was *reconciled*, **#Ro 11:15**; the GENTILES who were *enriched by the diminishing of the Jews*, **#Ro 11:12**; to whom salvation came through *their fall*, **#Ro 11:11**; the *Gentiles* who had *attained to righteousness*,

(justification,) **#Ro 9:30**; who had *not been God's people*, nor *believed*; but now were his *people*, *beloved*, and *children of the living God*, **#Ro 9:25, 26**; even *US whom he hath called*, *not of the Jews only*, *out also of the Gentiles*, **#Ro 9:24**, who are the *vessels of mercy*, *on whom God has made known the riches of his glory*, **#Ro 9:23**; the *vessels made unto honour*, **#Ro 9:21**. He speaks of the *same body of men* in all these places; namely, of the *believing Gentiles* principally, but not excluding the *small remnant of the believing Jews*, who were incorporated with them. And it is this body of men, whose *calling and election* he is proving, in whose case the *purpose of God according to election stands good*, **#Ro 9:11**, and who are the *children of the promise that are counted for the seed*, **#Ro 9:8**: these are the *election*, or the *elect*.

Now, concerning this *called* or *elect* body of people, or any particular person belonging to this body, the apostle writes thus, **#Ro 11:20-22**: *Well, because of unbelief, they (the Jews) were broken off, (reprobated, rejected,) and thou standest (in the Church among God's called and elect) by faith; be not high minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, (the Jews,) take heed, lest he also spare not thee, (the Gentiles.) Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them (the Jews) which fell, severity; but towards thee (believing Gentiles) goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off, rejected, reprobated.* This proves that the *calling*, and *election*, for which the apostle is arguing in the ninth chapter, is not *absolute election* unto *eternal life*, but to the *present privileges* of the Church-the *honours and advantages* of *God's peculiar people*; which *election*, through unbelief and misimprovement, may be rendered void and come to nothing. See Dr. Taylor, p. 330, &c.

From thus carefully considering the apostle's discourse, and taking in his scope and design, and weighing the different expressions he uses, in connection with the Scripture facts and Scripture phrases employed in describing those facts, we must be fully convinced that the doctrines of eternal, absolute, unconditional election and reprobation have no place here, and that nothing but a pre-established creed, and a total inattention to the apostles *scope* and *design*, could ever have induced men to bend these scriptures to the above purpose, and thus to endeavour to establish as articles of faith, doctrines which, far from producing *glory to God in the highest, and peace and good will among men*, have filled the Church of God with contention, set every man's sword against his brother, and thus done the work of *Apollyon* in the name of *Christ*. If men will maintain these and such like for *Scriptural* doctrines, it is but reasonable to request that it be done in the *spirit* of the Gospel.

# ROMANS

## CHAPTER X.

*The apostle expresses his earnest desire for the salvation of the Jews, 1. Having a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, they sought salvation by works, and not by faith in Christ, 2-4. The righteousness which is of the law described, 5. That which is by faith described also, 6-10. He that believes and calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, 11-13. What is necessary to salvation, believing, hearing, preaching, a Divine mission, the Gospel, and obedience to its precepts, 14-16. Faith comes by hearing, 17. The universal spread of the Gospel predicted by the prophets, 18-20. The ingratitude and disobedience of the Israelites, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. X.

Verse 1. **My heart's desire**, &c.] Though the apostle knew that the Jews were now in a state of rejection, yet he knew also that they were in this state through their own obstinacy, and that God was still waiting to be gracious, and consequently, that they might still repent and turn to him. Of his concern for their salvation he had already given ample proof, when he was willing to become a sacrifice for their welfare, see **#Ro 9:3**.

Verse 2. **They have a zeal of God**] They believe their law to have come immediately from God himself, and are jealous of its glory and excellence; they conscientiously observe its rites and ceremonies, but they do not consider the *object* and *end* of those rites; they sin more through ignorance than malice; and this pleads in their excuse. By this fine apology for them, the apostle prepares them for the harsher truths which he was about to deliver.

Verse 3. **For-being ignorant of God's righteousness**] Not knowing God's method of saving sinners, which is the only proper and efficient method: *and going about to establish their own righteousness*-seeking to procure their salvation by means of their own contriving; *they have not submitted*-they have not bowed to the determinations of the Most High, relative to his mode of saving mankind, viz. through faith in Jesus Christ, as the only available sacrifice for sin-the end to which the law pointed.

Verse 4. **For Christ is the end of the law**] Where the law ends, Christ begins. The law ends with representative sacrifices; Christ begins with the *real* offering. The law is our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ; it cannot save, but it leaves us at his door, where alone salvation is to be found. Christ as an atoning sacrifice for sin, was the grand *object* of the whole sacrificial code of Moses; his passion and death were the fulfilment of its great object and design. Separate this sacrificial death of Christ from the law, and the law has no meaning, for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins: wherefore the Messiah is represented as saying, *Sacrifice and observing thou didst not desire; burnt-offering and sin-offering thou hast not required; then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will; a body hast thou prepared me*, **#Ps 40:6,7**; **#Heb 10:4-10**; which proves that God never designed that the sacrifices of the law should be considered *the atonement* for sin, but a type or representative of that atonement; and that **THE** atonement was the sacrifice offered by Christ. Thus he was the *END of the law*, in respect to its *sacrifices*. And, as sacrifices were offered



merely to procure pardon of sin, righteousness, or justification, Christ is the end of the law for this justification *to every one that believeth* on him, as dying for their offences, and rising again for their justification, having made peace through the blood of his cross. Therefore every Jew who rejected Christ rejected salvation, and that very salvation which the law witnessed and required, and which could not be had but through Christ alone.

Verse 5. **For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law]** The place to which the apostle refers, seems to be **#Le 18:5**: *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them.* These words seem to be spoken in answer to an objection which might be made by a Jew: "Did not Moses give us a law, the observance of which should secure our salvation?" Such a law Moses undoubtedly gave, and that law promises life to those who perform its precepts: but who can plead for life on this ground, who rejects that Christ who is the *end of the law*? No man ever did, nor ever can, fulfil that law, so as to *merit* salvation by the performance of it: for, as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, they are all under the curse of the law, which says: *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them*, **#De 27:26**; **#Ga 3:10**; therefore by the deeds of this law none can be justified, because all are in a state of condemnation for transgressions already committed against it. If, therefore, there were not such a provision as is made by the death of Christ, no soul could be saved.

Verse 6. **But the righteousness which is of faith]** As it is most evident that there can be no justification by *works*, as all are *sinful* and all in a *guilty* state; if God will grant salvation at all, it must be by *faith*: but faith must have an *object* and a *reason* for its exercise; the *object* is Jesus Christ-the *reason* is the infinite merit of his passion and death.

**Who shall ascend unto heaven? &c.]** As Christ is the end of the law for justification to every one that believes, no observance of the law can procure *him*. *Who*, by the practice of the law, can bring Christ down from heaven? or, when brought down, and crucified and buried, as a sacrifice for sin, who can bring him up again from the dead? And both his *death* and *resurrection* are essentially necessary for the salvation of a lost world. Or the sense of the apostle may be this: They who will not believe in Christ crucified must in effect be seeking another Messiah to come down from heaven with a different revelation; or they who will not credit the doctrine that we preach concerning his *resurrection* seem in effect to say, Christ yet remains to be raised from the dead, and reign over the Jews as a mighty secular sovereign, subjecting the Gentile world to the sway of his righteous sceptre.

Verse 8. **But what saith it? The word is nigh thee]** There is no occasion to seek *high* or *low* for the saving power; the word of reconciliation is *nigh*. The way of salvation is now both plain and easy. The law is magnified and made honourable by the death of Christ; and the doctrine of faith in his death and resurrection is fully proclaimed, and amply proved to be effectual to the purpose for which it was revealed. By the preaching of the Gospel the doctrine of salvation is *nigh* thee, and the saving influence is *at hand*: it is *in thy mouth*, easy to be understood, easy to be *professed*: and *in thy heart*, if thou art upright before God, sincerely desiring to be saved on his own terms, not striving to establish thy own method of justification by the law, which must for ever be ineffectual, but submitting to the method of justification which God has devised.

Verse 9. **That if thou shalt confess, &c.]** Acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour. *Believe in thy heart* that he who died for thy offences has been *raised* for thy justification; and depend solely on him for that justification, *and thou shalt be saved*.

Verse 10. **For with the heart man believeth, &c.]** And be sincere in this: *for with the heart*, duly affected with a sense of guilt, and of the sufficiency of the sacrifice which Christ has offered, *man believeth unto righteousness*, believeth to receive *justification*; for this is the proper meaning of the term here, and in many other parts of this epistle; *and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*. He who believes aright in Christ Jesus will receive such a full conviction of the truth, and such an evidence of his redemption, that his mouth will boldly confess his obligation to his Redeemer, and the blessed persuasion he has of the remission of all his sins through the blood of the cross. One grand object of the apostle is to show the simplicity of the Gospel scheme of salvation; and at the same time, its great efficacy, it is *simple*, and very unlike the law, which was full of rites, ordinances, ceremonies, &c., each of which required to be perfectly fulfilled: and yet, after all, even those who had the utmost zeal for God, and, as conscientiously as possible, observed all the precepts of the law, had not attained to justification nor peace of conscience. Whereas both Jews and Gentiles, who had believed on the Lord Jesus according to the simple declarations of the Gospel, were freely justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses: and they had the witness in themselves that they were passed from death to life.

Verse 11. **For the Scripture saith]** And howsoever the Jews may despise this Gospel, because it comes not unto them with *pomp* and *ceremony*, it puts those who receive it into possession of every heavenly blessing: and this is according to the positive declarations of the prophets; for it is written, **#Isa 28:16; 49:23**: *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*. He shall neither be disappointed of his hope, nor ashamed of his confidence; because he has that *faith which is the evidence of things not seen, the subsistence of things hoped for*, **#Heb 11:1**. See Clarke's note on "**Ro 1:16**".

Verse 12. **For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek]** All are equally welcome to this salvation. Here the Jew has no exclusive privilege; and from this the Greek is not rejected. One simple way of being saved is proposed to all, viz. faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; because he is the same Lord who has made all and governs all, and is rich in mercy to all that call upon him.

Verse 13. **For whosoever shall call, &c.]** Nor shall any one who hears this doctrine of salvation, and credits it as he is commanded, be permitted to pray or supplicate the throne of grace in vain: for the Prophet Joel hath declared, **#Joe 2:32**: *Whosoever shall call upon, invoke, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, the Saviour of sinners, *shall be saved*-shall have his guilt pardoned, his heart purified; and if he abide in the faith, rooted and grounded in him, showing forth the virtues of him who was called him out of darkness into his marvellous light, *he shall be saved* with all the power of an *eternal* life.

"*Believing in Christ*, or God, **#Ro 10:11**, and *calling upon God*, **#Ro 10:12-14**, are in effect the same thing; as *calling upon God* necessarily connects and supposes faith in him: and he who duly believes in Christ has such a sense of his dependence upon Divine grace, that he looks unto God and

trusts in his power and goodness alone for happiness: which is the true religion of the Gospel." Dr. Taylor.

It is evident that St. Paul understood the text of *Joel* as relating to our blessed Lord; and therefore his word **κυριος** must answer to the prophet's word **יְהוָה** *Yehovah*, which is no mean proof of the Godhead of Jesus Christ. If the text be translated, *Whosoever shall invoke in the name of the Lord*, which translation **יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם יִקְרָא** *yikra beshem Yehovah* will certainly bear, yet still the term *Yehovah*, the incommunicable name, is given to Christ; because *invoking in the name* signifies soliciting one in the name or on the account of another. He who is invoked is GOD; he, in whose name he is invoked, is JESUS CHRIST, who is here called *Yehovah*. He who asks mercy from GOD, in the *name* and for the *sake* of JESUS CHRIST, shall get his soul saved.

Verse 14. **How then shall they call on him]** As the apostle had laid so much stress on *believing* in order to salvation, and as this doctrine, without farther explanation, might be misunderstood, it was necessary to show how this faith was produced; and therefore he lays the whole doctrine down in a beautifully graduated order.

1. There can be no salvation without the *Gospel*: a dispensation of mercy and grace from God alone, here called, **#Ro 10:15**, the *Gospel of peace; glad tidings of good things*.

2. *This must be preached*, proclaimed in the world for the obedience of faith.

3. None can effectually preach this unless he have a *Divine mission*; for *how shall they preach except they be SENT*, **#Ro 10:15**. The *matter* must come from God; and the *person* who proclaims it must have both *authority* and *unction* from on high.

4. This Divinely-commissioned person must be *heard*: it is the duty of all, to whom this message of salvation is sent, to *hear* it with the deepest reverence and attention.

5. What is *heard* must be *credited*; for they who do not believe the Gospel as the record which God has given of his Son cannot be saved, **#Ro 10:14**.

6. Those who believe must *invoke* God by Christ, which they cannot do unless they *believe* in him; and in this way alone they are to expect salvation. *Professing* to believe in Christ, without earnest, importunate *prayer* for salvation, can save no man. All these things the apostle lays down as essentially necessary; and they all follow from his grand proposition, *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*. But, says the apostle, *How shall they CALL upon him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they BELIEVE in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they HEAR without a preacher? And how shall they PREACH except they be sent?* And with what message which can bring *salvation* can they be sent, but with the GOSPEL OF PEACE, the GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS. When, therefore, there is: 1st, a proper MESSAGE; 2dly, a proper MESSENGER; 3dly, the message PREACHED, proclaimed, or properly delivered by him; 4thly, the proclamation properly HEARD and attentively considered by the people; 5thly, the message which they have *heard*, conscientiously BELIEVED; 6thly, the *name* of the Lord Jesus, by whom alone this salvation is provided, most fervently INVOKED; then, 7thly, salvation, or redemption from sin and

misery, and the enjoyment of peace and happiness, will be the result of such *calling, believing, hearing, preaching, sending, and message* sent:-and thus the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith is guarded from abuse.

Verse 15. **How beautiful are the feet of them that preach]** Dr. Taylor remarks on this quotation, which is taken from **#Isa 52:7**, that "*feet* are variously used in Scripture, and sometimes have respect to things *internal* and *spiritual*. For as the life of man and the practice of piety are compared to *walking*, **#Ps 1:1**, so his *feet* may signify the *principles* on which he acts, and the *dispositions* of his *mind*. **#Ec 5:1**: *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God*. Agreeably to this, the *feet* of the *messengers* in Isaiah and of the *apostles* in this verse, may signify the *validity of their mission*-the authority upon which they acted, and any character or qualifications with which they were invested."

Verse 16. **But they have not all obeyed the Gospel.]** This seems to be the objection of a *Jew*; as if he had said: A Divine mission would be attended with success; whereas there are numbers who pay no attention to the glad tidings you preach. To this the apostle answers, that the Spirit of God, by Isaiah, **#Isa 53:1**, foretold it would be *so*, even in the *case of the Jews* themselves, where he said, *Lord, who hath believed our report?* For although God brings the message of salvation to men, he does not *oblige* them to embrace it.

It is *proposed* to their understanding and conscience; but it does not become the means of salvation unless it be *affectionately credited*.

Verse 17. **So then faith cometh by hearing]** Preaching the Gospel is the ordinary means of salvation; faith in Christ is the result of hearing the *word*, the *doctrine of God preached*. Preaching, God sends; if heard attentively, faith will be produced; and if they believe the report, the arm of the Lord will be revealed in their salvation.

Verse 18. **But I say, have they not heard?]** But to return to the objection: You say *they have not all BELIEVED*; I ask: *Have they not all HEARD?* Have not the means of salvation been placed within the reach of every Jew in Palestine, and within the reach of all those who sojourn in the different Gentile countries where we have preached the Gospel, as well to the Jews as to the Gentiles themselves? Yes: for we may say of the preaching of the Gospel what the psalmist has said (**#Ps 19:4**) of the *heavenly bodies*: *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world*. As the celestial luminaries have given testimony of the eternal power and Godhead of the Deity to the habitable world, the Gospel of Christ has borne testimony to his eternal goodness and mercy to all the land of Palestine, and to the whole Roman empire. There is not a part of the promised land in which these glad tidings have not been preached; and there is scarcely a place in the Roman empire in which the doctrine of Christ crucified has not been heard: if, therefore, the Jews have not believed, the fault is entirely their own; as God has amply furnished them with the means of faith and of salvation.

In **#Ps 19:4**, the psalmist has קוֹל *kauuam*, their *line*, which the *Septuagint*, and the apostle who quotes from them, render φθογγος, *sound*; and hence some have thought that the word in the Psalm was originally קוֹל *kolam*, *voice*. But that קוֹל *kau* is used for *word* or *speech* is sufficiently evident

from **#Isa 28:10**, *line upon line*, precept upon precept, &c., where קר is analogous to *word* or *direction*. It is very remarkable that these words of David, quoted by St. Paul, are mentioned in *Sohar. Genes. fol. 9*, where it is said: עבדע משיחא אינון מלין *Abdey mashicha innun millin*. "These words are the servants of the Messiah, and measure out both the things above and the things beneath." To this notion of them the apostle may refer in his use of them in this place, and to a Jew the application would be legitimate.

Verse 19. **But I say, Did not Israel know?**] You object to this preaching among the *Gentiles*; but is not this according to the positive declaration of God? He, foreseeing your unbelief and rebellion, said by Moses, **#De 32:21**, *I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you*. As you have provoked me to jealousy with worshipping those that are *no gods*, I will provoke you to jealousy by those which are *no people*. This most evidently refers to the *calling* or *inviting* of the *Gentiles* to partake of the benefits of the Gospel; and plainly predicts the envy and rage which would be excited in the Jews, in consequence of those offers of mercy made to the *Gentiles*.

Verse 20. **But Esaias** (the Greek orthography for *Isaiah*) **is very bold**] Speaks out in the fullest manner and plainest language, **#Isa 65:1**, notwithstanding the danger to which such a declaration exposed him, among a crooked, perverse, and dangerous people: *I was found of them that sought me not*; I put my salvation *in the way* of those (the *Gentiles*) who were not seeking for it, and knew nothing of it: thus, the *Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to the law of righteousness*, **#Ro 9:30**, and they have found that redemption which the Jews have rejected.

Verse 21. **But to Israel he saith**] In the very next verse, (**#Isa 65:2**), *All day long have I stretched forth my hands*, manifesting the utmost readiness and willingness to gather them all together under my protecting care; but *I stretched forth my hands* in vain, for they are a *disobedient and gainsaying people*. They not only disobey my command, but they gainsay and contradict my prophets. Thus the apostle proves, in answer to the objection made **#Ro 10:16**, that the *infidelity* of the Jews was the effect of their own *obstinacy*; that the opposition which they are now making to the Gospel was foretold and deplored 700 years before; and that their opposition, far from being a proof of the insufficiency of the Gospel, proved that this was the grand means which God had provided for their salvation; and having rejected this, they could expect no other. And this gives the apostle opportunity to speak largely concerning their rejection in the following chapter.

I. IN the preceding chapter are several quotations from the *law*, the *prophets*, and the *Psalms*; and as the apostle seems to take them with considerable latitude of meaning, it has been thought that he only uses their *words* as being well calculated to express his *sense*, without paying any attention to their *original import*. This principle is too lax to be introduced in such solemn circumstances. Dr. Taylor has made some judicious and useful distinctions here. After observing that, if we allow this principle, no argument can be built on any of the apostle's quotations; and that it must have been an indifferent thing with him whether he did or did not understand the Scripture-as, on this supposition, they would serve him as well *without* as with the *true meaning*-he adds: the apostle was a strict and close quoter of the Scripture; but he did not always quote them in the same manner, or for the same purpose.

1. *Sometimes* his intention goes no farther than using the *same strong expressions*, as being equally applicable to the point in hand. So, **#Ro 10:6-8**, he uses the words of *Moses*, not to prove any thing, nor as if he thought *Moses* spoke of the same subject, but only as intimating that the strong and lively expressions which *Moses* used concerning the doctrine he taught, were equally applicable to the faith of the Gospel. So, in the same manner, **#Ro 10:18**, he quotes **#Ps 19:4**, though it is likely (see the note in that place) that those expressions were used by the ancient Jews in application to the *Messiah* as the apostle applies them.

2. *Sometimes* the design of the quotation is only to show that the *cases are parallel*: or, that what happened in his times corresponded with what happened in former days. So **#Ro 2:24; 8:36; 9:27-29; 11:2-5, 8-10; 15:21**.

3. *Sometimes* the quotation is only intended to *explain* a doctrinal point, as **#Ro 1:17; 4:6-8, 18-21; 9:20, 21; 10:15; 15:3**.

4. *Sometimes* the quotation is designed to *prove* a doctrinal point. **#Ro 3:4, 10-19; 4:3-17; 5:12-14; 9:7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17; #Ro 10:5, 11, 13; 12:19, 20; 13:9; 14:11**.

5. *Sometimes* it is the intention of the quotation to prove that something was **predicted**, or *properly foretold* in the prophetic writings, as **#Ro 9:25, 26, 33; 10:16, 19-21; 11:26, 27; 15:9-13**.

These things duly considered, it will appear that the apostle has every where shown a just regard to the true sense of the Scripture he quotes, in the *view* in which he quotes it.

These rules may help to vindicate the quotations in all the apostolic writings. And it is evident that we cannot form a true judgment upon any quotation, unless we take in the *intention* of the writer, or the *view* in which he quotes.

II. The apostle here makes a just and proper distinction between the righteousness or justification that is of the law, and that which is by faith in Christ. And, in his view of the former, shows it to be absolutely impossible; for if no man is *to live thereby*-to have *spiritual* and *eternal life*, but he who *does* these things; then salvation on that ground must be impossible; for, 1. The law makes no *provision* for the *pardon of sin*. 2. It affords no *helps* for the performance of duty. 3. It makes no *allowances* for imperfections in duty, or for imperfections in our nature. 4. Its commandments, necessarily, suppose a *righteous soul*, and a *vigorous body*; and it does not lower its claims to the fallen state of man. 5. It requires *perfect obedience*, not only in all *things*, but in all *places* and *circumstances*. The man who comes up to this standard, has ever *been in it*, and has never swerved from it, shall, by the law, live for ever. But no man, since the fall, ever did so or ever can do so: therefore, salvation by the works of the law is absolutely impossible. But, 1. The righteousness or justification, which is by faith, receives Christ as an atoning sacrifice, by which all past sin is pardoned. 2. Receives continual supplies of grace from Christ by the eternal Spirit, through which the man is enabled to love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself. 3. This grace is afforded in sufficient degrees suited to all places, times, and circumstances, so that no trial can happen too great to be borne, as the grace of Christ is ever at hand to support and

to save to the uttermost. The law is the letter that killeth; the Gospel is the spirit that giveth life. Reader, let thy whole soul say with the apostle, Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!



## ROMANS

### CHAPTER XI.

*God has not universally nor finally rejected Israel; nor are they all at present rejecters of the Gospel, for there is a remnant of true believers now, as there was in the days of the Prophet Elijah, 1-5. These have embraced the Gospel, and are saved by grace, and not by the works of the law, 6. The body of the Israelites, having rejected this, are blinded, according to the prophetic declaration of David, 7-10. But they have not stumbled, so as to be finally rejected; but through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles, 11-14. There is hope of their restoration, and that the nation shall yet become a holy people, 15, 16. The converted Gentiles must not exult over the fallen Jews; the latter having fallen by unbelief, the former stand by faith, 17-20. The Jews, the natural branches, were broken off from the true olive, and the Gentiles having been grafted in, in their place, must walk uprightly, else they also shall be cut off, 21, 22. The Jews, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be again grafted in; and when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, the great Deliverer shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, according to the covenant of God, 23-27. For the sake of their forefathers God loves them, and will again call them, and communicate His gifts to them, 28, 29. The Gospel shall be again sent to them, as it has now been sent to the Gentiles, 30-32. This procedure is according to the immensity of the wisdom, knowledge, and unsearchable judgments of God, who is the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and to whom all adoration is due, 33-36.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XI.

This chapter is of the *prophetic* kind. It was by the spirit of prophecy that the *apostle* foresaw the rejection of the Jews, which he supposes in the two preceding chapters; for when he wrote the epistle they were not in *fact*, rejected, seeing their polity and Church were then standing. But the event has proved that he was a true prophet; for we know that in about *ten* or *eleven* years after the writing of this letter the temple was destroyed, the Jewish polity overthrown, and the Jews expelled out of the promised land, which they have never been able to recover to the present day.

This, 1. confirms the arguments which the apostle had advanced to establish the calling of the Gentiles. For the Jews are, in *fact*, rejected; consequently, our calling is, in fact, not invalidated by any thing they suggested, relative to the *perpetuity* of the *Mosaic dispensation*. But that dispensation being wholly subverted, our title to the privileges of God's Church and people stands clear and strong; the Jewish constitution only could furnish objections against our claim; and the event has silenced every objection from that quarter.

2. The actual rejection of the Jews proves Paul to be a *true apostle* of Jesus Christ, and that he spoke by the Spirit of God; otherwise, he could not have argued so fully upon a case which was yet to come, and of which there was no appearance in the state of things when he wrote this epistle. And this very circumstance should induce us to pay great attention to this chapter, in which he discourses concerning the *extent* and *duration* of the rejection of his countrymen, to prevent their being insulted and despised by the *Gentile Christians*. (1) As to the *extent* of this rejection, it is not absolutely *universal*; some of the Jews have embraced the Gospel, and are incorporated into the Christian

Church with the believing Gentiles. Upon the case of these believing Jews he comments, **#Ro 11:1-7**. (2) As to the *duration* of it, it is not *final* and *perpetual*, for *all Israel*, or the nation of the Jews, which is now *blinded*, shall one day be *saved* or brought again into the kingdom or covenant of God. Upon the state of these *blinded* Jews he comments, **#Ro 11:7** to the end of the chapter. His design, in discoursing upon this subject, was not only to make the thing itself known, but partly to engage the attention of the unbelieving Jew; to conciliate his favour, and, if possible, to induce him to come into the Gospel scheme; and partly to dispose the *Gentile Christians* not to treat the Jews with contempt; (considering that they derived all their present blessings from the *patriarchs*, the *ancestors* of the Jewish nation, and were engrafted into the good olive tree, whence the Jews had been broken;) and to admonish them to take warning by the fall of the Jews; to make a good improvement of their religious privileges, lest, through unbelief, any of them should relapse into *heathenism*, or perish finally at the last day.

The thread of his discourse leads him into a general survey and comparison of the several dispensations of God towards the *Gentiles* and *Jews*; and he concludes this survey with adoration of the depths of the Divine knowledge and wisdom exercised in the various constitutions erected in the world, **#Ro 11:30-36**.

Verse 1. **I say then, hath God cast away his people?**] Has he *utterly* and *finally* rejected them? for this is necessarily the apostle's meaning, and is the import of the Greek word **απωσατο**, which signifies to *thrust* or *drive away*, from **απο**, *from*, and **ωθειω**, to *thrust* or *drive*; has he thrust them off, and driven them eternally from him? *God forbid*-by no means. This rejection is neither *universal* nor *final*. *For I also am an Israelite*-I am a regular descendant from *Abraham*, through *Israel* or *Jacob*, and by his son *Benjamin*. And I stand in the Church of God, and in the peculiar covenant; for the rejection is only of the obstinate and disobedient; for those who believe on Christ, as I have done, are continued in the Church.

Verse 2. **God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.**] God has not finally and irrecoverably rejected a people whom he has *loved* (or *approved*) *so long*, **ου προεγνω**, for this is evidently the meaning of the word in this place, as we have already seen, **#Ro 8:29**, and is a very general meaning of the original verb **יָדָע** *yada* in Hebrew and **γινωσκω** in Greek; as I have had often occasion to notice in different parts of this work, and what none will deny who consults the original. See *Schleusner*, *Parkhust*, &c.

**Wot ye not what the Scripture saith**] **ουκ οιδατε**, *Do ye not know what the Scripture saith?* The reference is to **#1Ki 19:10,14**. And the apostle's answer to the objecting Jew is to the following effect: God hath not universally thrust away his people, for whom in the promise to Abraham he intended, and to whom decreed, to grant his special favour and blessing; but the case is now much as it was in the days of Elijah: that prophet, in his addresses to God, made his complaint against Israel thus:-

Verse 3. **Lord, they have killed thy prophets**] They will not permit any person to speak unto them in thy name; and they murder those who are faithful to the commission which they have received from thee.

**Digged down thine altars]** They are profligate and profane beyond example, and retain not the slightest form of religion.

**I am left alone]** There is no prophet besides myself left, and they seek to destroy me.

Verse 4. **But what saith the answer of God]** The answer which God made assured him that there were *seven thousand*, that is, *several* or *many thousands*; for so we must understand the word *seven*, a *certain* for an *uncertain* number. These had continued faithful to God; but, because of Jezebel's persecution, they were obliged to *conceal* their attachment to the true religion; and God, in his providence, preserved them from her sanguinary rage.

**Who have not bowed the knee]** Baal was the god of Jezebel; or, in other words, his worship was then the worship of the *state*; but there were several thousands of pious Israelites who had not acknowledged this idol, and did not partake in the idolatrous worship.

Verse 5. **Even so then at this present time]** As in the present day the irreligion of the Jews is very great; yet there is a *remnant*, a considerable number, who have accepted of the grace of the Gospel.

**According to the election of grace.]** And these are saved just as God has saved all believers from the beginning; they are chosen by his *grace*, not on account of any *worth* or *excellence* in themselves, but through his goodness are they chosen to have a place in his Church, and continue to be his people, entitled to all the privileges of the new covenant. The *election of grace* simply signifies God's gracious design in sending the Christian system into the world, and saving under it all those who believe in Christ Jesus, and none else. Thus the believers in Christ are *chosen* to inherit the blessings of the Gospel, while those who seek justification by the works of the law are *rejected*.

Verse 6. **And if by grace]** And let this very remnant of pious Jews, who have believed in Christ Jesus, know that *they* are brought in, precisely in the same way as God has brought in the *Gentiles*; the one having no more *worthiness* to plead than the other; *both* being brought in, and continued in by God's free grace, and not by any observance of the Mosaic law.

And this is done *according to the election of grace*, or the *rule* of choosing any persons to be the people of God upon the footing of grace; which takes in all that *believe* in his Son Jesus Christ: some of the Jewish people did so believe; therefore those believing Jews are a *remnant according to the election of grace*. They are saved in that way in which alone God will save mankind.

**And if by grace]** Then let these very persons remember, that their election and interest in the covenant of God has no connection with their *old Jewish works*; for were it of *works*, *grace* would lose its proper nature, and cease to be what it is—a *free undeserved gift*.

**But if it be of works]** On the other hand, could it be made to appear that they are invested in these privileges of the kingdom of Christ only by the *observance of the law of Moses*, then GRACE would be quite set aside; and if it were not, *work*, or the *merit of obedience*, would lose its proper

nature, which excludes *favour* and *free gift*. But it is not, and cannot be, of *WORKS*; for those very Jews who now believe, and are happy in the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, are so *according to the election of grace*, which does not mean a particular act of God's sovereignty, which has singled out some of the Jews who deserved to have been cast off as well as the rest; but it is that general scheme of grace, according to which God purposed to take into his Church and kingdom any, among either Jews or Gentiles, who should believe on Christ. And the *remnant* here mentioned were not *selected* from their countrymen by such a *sovereign* act of God's grace as might have taken in the whole if it had so pleased; but they were admitted into and received the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, *because they believed on the Lord Jesus*, and received him as their *only Saviour*; and thus came into that *scheme of election* which God had appointed. And we may observe, farther, that out of this election *they* as well as the *others* would have been excluded, had *they* like the *rest* remained in unbelief; and into this *election of grace* all the Jews, to a man, notwithstanding they were all sinners, would have been taken, had they believed in Christ Jesus. This is the true notion of the *election of grace*. See *Taylor*.

Verse 7. **What then?**] What is the real state of the case before us? *Israel*-the body of the Jewish people, have not obtained that which they so earnestly desire, i.e. to be continued, as they have been hitherto, the peculiar people of God; *but the election hath obtained it*-as many of them as have believed in Jesus Christ, and accepted salvation through him: this is the grand scheme of the *election by grace*; God chooses to make those his peculiar people who believe in his Son, and none other shall enjoy the blessings of his kingdom. Those who would not receive him are blinded; they have shut their eyes against the light, and are in the very circumstances of those mentioned by the Prophet Isaiah, **#Isa 29:10**.

Verse 8. **God hath given them the spirit of slumber**] As they had *wilfully* closed their eyes against the light, so God has, in judgment, given them up to the *spirit of slumber*. The very word and revelation of God, which should have awakened their consciences, and opened their eyes and ears, have had a very different effect; and because *they did not receive the truth in the love thereof*, that which would otherwise have been the *savour of life unto life*, has become the *savour of death unto death*; and this continues to the present day.

Verse 9. **And David saith, Let their table, &c.**] And from their present disposition it is reasonable to conclude that the same evils will fall upon them as fell upon the disobedient in former times, as predicted by David, **#Ps 69:22, 23**, that their very *blessings* should become *curses* to them, and their *temporal mercies* be their only recompense; and yet even these earthly blessings, by not being enjoyed in the Lord, should be a stumbling block over which they should fall, and, instead of being a *blessing*, should be the means of their *punishment*. They *would* have a *worldly* Messiah, and therefore they rejected him whose kingdom was not of this world.

Verse 10. **Let their eyes be darkened**] All these words are *declarative*, and not *imprecatory*. God *declares* what will be the case of such obstinate unbelievers; their *table*, their common providential blessings, will *become a snare*, a *trap*, a *stumbling block*, and the means of their punishment. Their eyes will be more and more darkened as they persist in their unbelief, and their *back shall be bowed down always*; far from becoming a *great* and *powerful nation*, they shall

continue ever in a state of *abject slavery* and oppression, till they acknowledge Jesus as the promised Messiah, and submit to receive redemption in his blood.

Verse 11. **Have they stumbled that they should fall?**] Have the Jews, now for their disobedience and unbelief rejected, so sinned against God as to be for ever put out of the reach of his mercy? *By no means*. Are they, as a nation, utterly irrecoverable? This is the sense of the place, and here the prophecy of the restoration of the Jewish nation commences.

**But rather through their fall salvation is come]** The Church of God cannot fail; if the Jews have *broken the everlasting covenant*, #Isa 24:5, the Gentiles shall be taken into it; and this very circumstance shall be ultimately the means of exciting them to seek and claim a share in the blessings of the new covenant; and this is what the apostle terms *provoking them to jealousy*, i.e. exciting them to emulation, for so the word should be understood. We should observe here, that the *fall of the Jews* was not in *itself* the cause or reason of the *calling of the Gentiles*; for whether the Jews had *stood* or *fallen*, whether they had *embraced* or *rejected* the Gospel, it was the original purpose of God to take the Gentiles into the Church; for this was absolutely implied in the covenant made with Abraham: and it was in virtue of that covenant that the Gentiles were now called, and *not* BECAUSE of the *unbelief* of the *Jews*. And hence we see that their fall was not the necessary means of the salvation of the Gentiles; for certainly the *unbelief* of the *Jews* could never produce *faith* in the *Gentiles*. The simple state of the case is: the Jews, in the most obstinate and unprincipled manner, rejected Jesus Christ and the salvation offered them in his name; then the apostles *turned to the Gentiles*, and they heard and believed. The Jews themselves perceived that the Gentiles were to be put in possession of similar privileges to those which they, as the peculiar people of God, had enjoyed; and this they could not bear, and put forth all their strength in opposition and persecution. The *calling of the Gentiles*, which existed in the original purpose of God, became in a certain way *accelerated* by the unbelief of the Jews, through which they forfeited all their privileges, and *fell* from that state of glory and dignity in which they had been long placed as the peculiar people of God. See *Taylor*.

Verse 12. **Now if the fall of them]** The English reader may imagine that, because *fall* is used in both these verses, the original word is the same. But *their fall*, and *the fall of them*, is παραπτωμα, the same word which we render *offence*, #Ro 5:15, 17, 18, and might be rendered *lapse*. Whereas *that they should fall* (#Ro 11:11) is, *ὡς πεσῶσι*. Now, *πιπτω*, *to fall*, is used in a sense so very emphatical as to signify *being slain*. So Homer, Il. viii., ver. 475.

Ἡματι τῷ, ὅτ' ἂν οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ πρυμνήσι μαχῶνται,  
Στείλει ἐν ἀϊνοτάτῳ, περὶ Πατροκλοῖο πεσόντος·  
Ὡς γὰρ θεοφάτον ἐστι.

And for Patroclus *slain*, the crowded hosts,  
In narrow space, shall at the ships contend.  
Such the divine decree.

And again, II. xi., ver. 84.

Οφρα μὲν ἤως ἡν καὶ ἀέξετο ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ,  
Τοφρα μάλ' ἀμφοτέρων βέλε' ἥπτετο, πίπτε δὲ λαός.

While morning lasted, and the light of day  
Increased, so long the weapons on both sides  
Flew in thick volleys; and the people *fell*.

COWPER.

It is well known, that to *fall* in battle means to be *killed*. It is in such a sense as this that St. Paul used the word *fall*, when he says, *Have they stumbled that they should FALL?* He means a *fall* quite *destructive* and *ruinous*; whereas by *their fall*, and *the fall of them*, he means no more than such a lapse as was *recoverable*; as in the case of Adam's offence. See Dr. Taylor.

**The riches of the world]** If, in consequence of their unbelief, the *riches* of God's grace and goodness be poured out on the whole Gentile world, how much more shall that dispensation of grace and mercy enrich and aggrandize the Gentiles, which shall bring the whole body of the Jews to the faith of the Gospel! Here the apostle supposes, or rather predicts, that such a dispensation shall take place; and that, therefore, the Jews have not so *stumbled* as to be finally *irrecoverable*.

Verse 13. This and the following verse should be read in a parenthesis. St. Paul, as the apostle of the Gentiles, wished to show them the high pitch of glory and blessedness to which they had been called, that they might have a due sense of God's mercy in calling them to such a state of salvation; and that they might be jealous over themselves, lest they should fall as the Jews had done before them: and he dwells particularly on the greatness of those privileges which the Gentiles had now received, that he might stir up the minds of his countrymen to emulation, and might be the means of *saving some of them*, as he states in the following verse.

**I magnify mine office]** This is a very improper translation of *τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω*, which is, literally, *I honour this my ministry*. Dr. Taylor has justly observed that *magnify*, except when applied to the most High, carries with it, in our language, the idea of stretching beyond the bounds of truth; whereas the apostle simply means that he does justice to his ministry, by stating the glorious things which he was commissioned to preach among the Gentiles: blessings which the Jews by their obstinacy had forfeited.

Verse 14. **Might save some of them.]** And yet *all* these were among the *reprobate*, or *rejected*; however, the apostle supposed that *none* of them were *irrecoverably* shut out from the Divine favour; and that *some* of them, by his preaching, might be disposed to receive salvation by Christ Jesus.

Verse 15. **But life from the dead]** If the rejection of the Jews became the occasion of our receiving the Gospel, so that we can even glory in our tribulations, though they themselves became chief instruments of our sufferings; yet so far must we feel from exulting over them that we should

esteem their full conversion to God as great and choice a favour as we would the restoration of a most intimate friend to life, who had been at the gates of death.

The restoration of the Jews to a state of favour with God to which the apostle refers, and which is too plainly intimated by the spirit of prophecy to admit of a doubt, will be a most striking event. Their being preserved as a *distinct people* is certainly a strong collateral proof that they shall once more be brought into the Church of God: and their conversion to Christianity will be an incontestable proof of the truth of Divine revelation; and doubtless will become the means of converting multitudes of deists, who will see the prophecies of God, which had been delivered so long before, so strikingly fulfilled in this great event. We need not wonder, if a whole nation should then be born as in a day.

Verse 16. **For if the first fruit be holy]** As the consecrating the first fruits to God was the means of drawing down his blessing upon the rest, so the conversion of Abraham to the true faith, and the several Jews who have now embraced Christianity, are pledges that God will, in process of time, admit the whole Jewish nation into his favour again, so that they shall constitute a part of the visible Church of Christ.

**If the root be holy, so are the branches.]** The word *holy* in this verse is to be taken in that sense which it has so frequently in the Old and New Testaments, viz. *consecrated, set apart to sacred uses*. It must not be forgotten that the first converts to Christ were from among the *Jews*; these formed the *root* of the Christian Church: these were *holy*, *ἁγιοι*, *consecrated* to God, and those who among the Gentiles were converted by their means were also *ἁγιοι*, *consecrated*; but the chief reference is to the ancestors of the Jewish people, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and, as these were *devoted to God* and received into his covenant, all their posterity, the *branches* which proceeded from this *root*, became entitled to the same privileges: and as the *root* still remains, and the *branches* also, the descendants from that root still remain: they still have a certain title to the blessings of the covenant; though, because of their obstinate unbelief, these blessings are suspended, as they cannot, even on the ground of the *old covenant*, enjoy these blessings but through *faith*: for it was when Abraham *believed* God that it was accounted to him for righteousness; and thus he became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Verse 17. **And if some of the branches, &c.]** If the present nation of the Jews, because of their unbelief, are cut off from the blessings of the Church of God, and the high honour and dignity of being his peculiar people; *and thou, being a wild olive-ye Gentiles*, being without the knowledge of the true God, and consequently bringing forth no fruits of righteousness, *were grafted in among them*-are now inserted in the original stock, having been made partakers of the faith of Abraham, and consequently of his blessings; and enjoy, as the people did who sprang from him, *the fatness of the olive tree*-the promises made to the patriarchs, and the spiritual privileges of the Jewish Church:—

Verse 18. **Boast not against the branches.]** While you are ready to acknowledge that you were included in the covenant made with Abraham, and are now partakers of the same blessings with him, do not *exult over*, much less *insult*, *the branches*, his present descendants, whose place you now fill up, *according to the election of grace*: for remember, ye are not the *root*, nor do ye *bear the root*, but *the root bears you*. You have not been the *means* of deriving any blessing on the Jewish people; but



through that very people, which you may be tempted to despise, all the blessing and excellencies which you enjoy have been communicated to you.

Verse 19. **Thou wilt say then, &c.]** You may think that you have reason to exult over them; because it is a fact that God has been displeased with them, and therefore has *broken them off*; has cast them out of the Church, and taken you into it in their place.

Verse 20. **Well; because of unbelief, &c.]** This statement is all true; but then, consider, *why* is it that they were *cast out*? Was it not *because* of their unbelief? And you stand by *faith*: you were made partakers of these blessings by *faith*; be not *high-minded*; let this humble, not exalt you in your own estimation; for if the blessings were received by *faith*, consequently not by works; and if not by works, you have no merit; and what you have received is through the mere mercy of God. They once stood by *faith*; they gave place to *unbelief*, and fell: you stand now by *faith*; but it is as possible for you to be unfaithful as it was for them, and consequently *you* may fall under the Divine displeasure, as *they* have done; be not high-minded, but fear; watch over yourselves with godly jealousy.

Verse 21. **For if God spared not the natural branches]** If He, in his infinite justice and holiness, could not tolerate sin in the *people whom he foreknew*, whom he had so *long loved*, cherished, miraculously preserved and blessed; take heed *lest he also spare not thee*. Be convinced that the same righteous principle in him will cause him to act towards you as he has acted towards them, if you sin after the similitude of their transgression; and to this, self-sufficiency and self-confidence will soon lead you. Remember, therefore, the rock whence you were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. Depend incessantly on God's free grace, that ye may abide in his favour.

Verse 22. **Behold therefore the goodness]** The exclamation, *Behold the goodness of God!* is frequent among the Jewish writers, when they wish to call the attention of men to particular displays of God's mercy, especially towards those who are singularly unworthy. See several instances in *Schoettgen*.

**And severity of God]** As *χρηστοτης*, *goodness*, signifies the essential quality of the Divine nature, the fountain of all good to men and angels, so *αποτομια*, *severity*, as it is here translated, signifies that particular exercise of his *goodness* and holiness which leads him to sever from his mystical body whatsoever would injure, corrupt, or destroy it. The apostle in these verses uses a metaphor taken from engrafting, *εγκεντρισις*, from the verb *εγκεντριζω*, from *εν*, *in*, and *κεντριζω*, *to puncture*, because engrafting was frequently done by making a *puncture* in the bark of a tree, and then *inserting a bud* taken from another. This was the practice in the Roman agriculture, as we learn from Virgil, Georg. ii, ver. 73:—

*Nam qua se medio trudunt de cortice gemmæ,  
Et tenues rumpunt tunicas, angustus in ipso  
Fit nodo sinus: huc aliena ex arbore germen  
Includunt, udoque docent inolescere libro.*

For where the tender rinds of trees disclose  
Their shooting *gems*, a swelling knot there grows;  
Just in that space a *narrow slit* we make,  
Then *other buds* from bearing trees we take;  
*Inserted* thus, the *wounded rind* we close,  
In whose moist womb the admitted infant grows.  
DRYDEN.

In all countries the *principle* is the same, though the *mode* is various.

The apostle, having adopted this metaphor as the best he could find to express that act of God's justice and mercy by which the Jews were rejected, and the Gentiles elected in their stead, and, in order to show that though the Jewish tree *was cut down*, or its *branches lopped off*, yet it was not *rooted up*, he informs the Gentile believers that, as it is *customary* to insert a *good scion in a bad* or *useless* stock, they who were bad, contrary to the custom in such cases, were grafted in a *good stock*, and their growth and fruitfulness proclaimed the excellence and vegetative life of the stock in which they were inserted. This was the *goodness* of the heavenly gardener to them; but it was *severity*, *αποτομία*, an act of *excision* to the Jews.

The reader will observe that this term belongs to engrafting: often, in this operation, a part of a *branch* is cut off; in that part which remains in connection with the tree a little slit is made, and then a small twig or branch taken from another tree is, at its lower end, shaved thin, wedge-like, and then inserted in the cleft, after which the whole is tied together, clayed round, &c., and the bark unites to bark; and the *stock* and the *scion* become thus one tree, the juices of the whole stock circulating through the tubes of the newly-inserted twig; and thus both live, though the branch inserted bears a very different fruit from that which the parent stock bore. I have often performed this operation, and in this very way, with success: and I cannot conceive that the apostle could have chosen a more apt or more elegant metaphor. The *Jewish tree* does not bring forth proper fruit; but it will answer well to ingraft a proper fruit-bearing tree on. The *Gentiles* are a *wild olive*, which is a tree that bears no fruit; but it may be made to bear if grafted on the Jewish *stock*. *Some of the branches were cut off*, that the branches of this wild olive might be inserted: the act by which this insertion is made is termed *αποτομία*, *goodness*, *benignity*: the act by which the branches of the original stock are broken off is termed *αποτομία*, *excision*; from *απο*, *from*, and *τεμνω*, *I cut*, still keeping the metaphor taken from engrafting in view. Now, let the apostle's mode of reasoning be observed: the tree is *cut down*, or its *branches lopped off*; but the tree is not *rooted up*. The Jews have stumbled, but not so as to *fall* irrecoverably; for *if they abide not still in unbelief*, they shall be grafted in, **#Ro 11:23**. The Gentiles which are grafted in on these cut-off branches, like the scion inserted into another stock, *partake of the root*, which absorbs from the earth the nutritious juices, *and the fatness* of the Jewish tree, the blessings and privileges which that people have long enjoyed, in consequence of the Abrahamic covenant, **#Ro 11:17**; *the root*, the Jewish covenant, *bears them*: not they the *root*, **#Ro 11:18**. As, therefore, the continuance of the Gentiles as the Church and people of God depends upon their interest in the Abrahamic covenant, the blessings of which they derive through the medium of the Jews, they should be grateful to God, and tolerant to those through whom they have received such blessings. And as, in the case of grafting, the prosperity of the engrafted scion depends on the existence of the parent stock, so the continuance of the Gentiles in this state of favour, (following

the metaphor,) in a certain way depends on the continuance of the Jewish people: and *they* are preserved, as so many *scions* which are in process of time to be engrafted on the *Gentiles*; and thus the *Gentiles* shall become the *means* of salvation to the *Jews*, as the *Jews* have been the means of salvation to the *Gentiles*. Following, therefore, the metaphor a little farther, which seems to have been so well chosen in all its parts, the continued existence of the Jews as a distinct people, together with the acknowledgment of the Gentiles, that they have derived their salvation and state of blessedness through them-of which Jesus Christ, born of the stock of David, is the *author*; and the Jewish *Scriptures*, which the Gentiles receive as inspired by God, are the *evidence*-then, the restoration of the Jews to the favour of God is a necessary consequence, and indeed seems to be the principal end in reference to which the apostle reasons. The Gentiles, however, are to take care that the restoration of the Jews be not at *their* expense; as *their* calling and election were at the expense of the *Jews*: the *latter* being cut off, that the *former* might be grafted in, **#Ro 11:19**. Of this there is no kind of necessity, for the original stock, the Abrahamic covenant, is sufficient to receive them all; and so Jews and Gentiles become one eternal flock, under one Bishop and Shepherd of all their souls.

Verse 23. **If they abide not in unbelief]** So, we find that their rejection took place in consequence of their *wilful* obstinacy: and, that they *may* return into the fold, the door of which still stands open.

**For God is able to graft them in again.]** Fallen as they are and degraded, God can, in the course of his providence and mercy, restore them to all their forfeited privileges; and this will take place if *they abide not in unbelief*: which intimates that God has furnished them with all the *power* and *means* necessary for *faith*, and that they *may believe* on the Lord Jesus whenever they will. The *veil* now continues on their heart; but it is not a veil which God has spread there, but a veil occasioned by their own voluntary and obstinate unbelief: and, when they shall turn to the Lord, (Jesus,) the veil shall be taken away. See what the apostle has said, **#2Co 3:6-18**.

Verse 24. **The olive tree, which is wild by nature]** Which is *κατα φύσιν*, *naturally*, wild and barren; for that the *wild olive* bore no fruit is sufficiently evident from the testimony of the authors who have written on the subject; hence the proverb, *ακαρποτερος αγριππου* more unfruitful than the wild olive. *λακωνες γαρ αγριαν ελαιαν αγιππον καλουσι* for the Lacedemonians term the wild olive *αγριππον*. See SUIDAS. And hence HESYCHIUS interprets *αγριελαιος*, *the wild olive*, (the word used here by St. Paul,) by *ακαρπος*, *unfruitful*: and the reason given in DIOGEN. Proverb. Cent. ii. n. 63, is *φυτον γαρ εστιν ο αγριππος ακαρπον* for the wild olive is an unfruitful tree. On this account the apostle very properly says: *Thou wert cut*, *εκ της κατα φυσιν αγριελαιου*, *out of that olive which is uncultivated*, because it is *barren*: the *κατα φυσιν* does not refer here to its being *naturally* barren; but to its being *commonly* or *customarily* permitted to remain so. And that this is the import of the phrase here is evident from the next clause of the verse.

**And wert grafted contrary to nature]** *παρα φυσιν*, *contrary* to all *custom*; for a scion taken from a *barren* or *useless* tree is scarcely ever known to be grafted into a good stock; but here the *Gentiles*, a *fruitless* and *sinful* race, are grafted on the ancient *patriarchal stock*. Now, if it was possible to effect such a change in the *state* and *disposition* of the *Gentiles*, who were *αθεοι εν τω κοσμω*, **#Eph 2:12**, *without God*, ATHEISTS, *in the world*; how much more possible is it, speaking

after the manner of men, to bring about a similar change in the *Jews*, who acknowledge the one, only, and true God, and receive the law and the prophets as a revelation from him. This seems to be the drift of the apostle's argument.

Verse 25. **I would not-that ye should be ignorant of this mystery]** Mystery, **μυστηριον**, signifies any thing that is *hidden* or *covered*, or not *fully made manifest*. The Greek word seems to have been borrowed from the Hebrew **מִסְתָּר** *mistar*, from the root **סָתַר** *sathar*, to *hide*, *conceal*, &c.; though some derive it from **μυεῖσθαι**, to *be initiated into sacred rites*, from **μυεῖν**, to *shut up*. In the New Testament it signifies, generally, *any thing or doctrine that has not, in former times, been fully known to men*: or, *something that has not been heard of, or which is so deep, profound, and difficult of comprehension, that it cannot be apprehended without special direction and instruction*: here it signifies the doctrine of the *future restoration of the Jews*, not fully known in *itself*, and not at all known as to the *time* in which it will take place. In **#Ro 16:25** it means the *Christian religion*, not known till the advent of Christ. The apostle wished the Romans not to be ignorant of this mystery, viz. that such a thing was intended; and, in order to give them as much instruction as possible on this subject, he gives them some characteristic or sign of the times when it was to take place.

**Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits]** It seems from this, and from other expressions in this epistle, that the converted Gentiles had not behaved toward the Jews with that decorum and propriety which the relation they bore to them required. In this chapter the apostle strongly guards them against giving way to such a disposition.

**Blindness in part is happened to Israel]** Partial blindness, or blindness to a *part of them*; for they were not all unbelievers: several thousands of them had been converted to the Christian faith; though the *body* of the nation, and especially its *rulers*, civil and spiritual, continued opposed to Christ and his doctrine.

**Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.]** And this blindness will continue till the Church of the Gentiles be fully completed-till the Gospel be preached through all the nations of the earth, and multitudes of heathens every where embrace the faith. The words **πληρωμα των εθνων** may be borrowed from the **הַגּוֹיִם מְלֵא** *melo haggoyim*, a *multitude of nations*, which the Septuagint translate by **πληθος εθνων**. By the **πληρωμα**, or *fulness*, a great *multitude* may be intended, which should be so dilated on every hand as to fill *various regions*. In this sense the words were understood by *Solomon ben Melec*, **אַרְצוֹת הַגּוֹיִם שִׁמְלֵאוּ מֵהֶם**. *The nations of the Gentiles shall be filled with them*: the apostle, therefore, seems to give this sense of the mystery-that the Jews will continue in a state of blindness till such time as a *multitude of nations*, or *Gentiles*, shall be converted to the Christian faith; and the Jews, hearing of this, shall be excited, by a spirit of emulation, to examine and acknowledge the validity of the proofs of Christianity, and embrace the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We should not restrict the meaning of these words too much, by imagining, 1. That the *fulness* must necessarily mean *all the nations of the universe*, and all the *individuals* of those nations: probably, no more than a *general spread* of Christianity over many nations which are now under the influence of *Pagan* or *Mohammedan* superstition may be what is intended. 2. We must not suppose

that the *coming in* here mentioned necessarily means, what most religious persons understand by *conversion*, a thorough change of the whole heart and the whole life: the acknowledgment of the Divine mission of our Lord, and a cordial embracing of the Christian religion, will sufficiently fulfil the apostle's words. If we wait for the conversion of the *Jews* till such a time as *every Gentile and Mohammedan soul* shall be, in this *especial* sense, converted to God, then-we shall wait for ever.

Verse 26. **And so all Israel shall be saved]** Shall be brought *into the way of salvation*, by acknowledging the Messiah; for the word certainly does not mean eternal glory; for no man can conceive that a time will ever come in which every Jew then living, shall be taken to the *kingdom of glory*. The term *saved*, as applied to the Israelites in different parts of the Scripture, signifies no more than *their being gathered out of the nations of the world, separated to God, and possessed of the high privilege of being his peculiar people*. And we know that this is the meaning of the term, by finding it applied to the body of the Israelites when this alone was the sum of their state. See the *Preface*, page viii, &c.

**As it is written]** The apostle supports what he advances on this head by a quotation from Scripture, which, in the main, is taken from **#Isa 59:20**: The Deliverer shall come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Now this cannot be understood of the manifestation of Christ among the Jews; or of the multitudes which were converted *before, at, and for some time after*, the day of pentecost; for these times were all *past* when the apostle wrote this epistle, which was probably about the 57th or 58th year of our Lord; and, as no remarkable conversion of that people has since taken place, therefore the fulfilment of this prophecy *is yet to take place*. In what manner Christ *is to come out of Zion*, and in what way or by what *means* he is to *turn away transgression from Jacob*, we cannot tell; and to attempt to *conjecture*, when the time, occasion, means, &c., are all in *mystery*, would be more than reprehensible.

Verse 27. **For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.]** The reader on referring to **#Isa 59:20, 21**, will find that the words of the original are here greatly abridged. They are the following:—

*And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.*

For the manner in which St. Paul makes his quotation from Scripture, see the observations at the end of the preceding chapter. The whole of these two verses should be read in a parenthesis, as I have marked them in the text; for it is evident that the 25th verse should be immediately connected with the 28th.

It may not be amiss to subjoin here a collection of those texts in the Old Testament that seem to point out a restoration of the Jewish commonwealth to a higher degree of excellence than it has yet attained. **#Isa 2:2-5; 19:24, 25; 25:6, &c.; #Isa 30:18, 19, 26; #Isa 60:1-22; #Isa 65:17-25; #Jer 31:10-12; 46:27, 28; #Eze 20:34, 40, &c.; #Eze 28:25, 26; 34:20, &c.; #Eze 36:8-16; 37:21-28;**

**#Eze 39:25, &c.; #Joe 3:1, 2, 17, 20, 21; #Am 9:9-15; #Ob 1:17, 21; #Mic 4:3-7; 7:18-20; #Zep 3:19, 20.**

Verse 28. **As concerning the Gospel]** The unbelieving Jews, with regard to the *Gospel* which they have rejected, are at present *enemies* to God, and aliens from his kingdom, under his Son Jesus Christ, on account of that extensive grace which has overturned their *peculiarity*, by admitting the Gentiles into his Church and family: but with regard to the original purpose of *election*, whereby they were chosen and separated from all the people of the earth to be the peculiar people of God, *they are beloved for the fathers' sake*; he has still favour in store for them on account of their *forefathers* the *patriarchs*.

Verse 29. **For the gifts and calling of God, &c.]** The *gifts* which God has bestowed upon them, and the *calling*-the invitation, with which he has favoured them he will never revoke. In reference to this point there is no *change of mind* in him; and therefore the *possibility* and *certainly* of their restoration to their original privileges, of being the people of God, of enjoying every spiritual blessing with the *fulness of the Gentiles*, may be both reasonably and safely inferred.

*Repentance*, when applied to God, signifies simply *change of purpose* relative to some declarations made subject to certain *conditions*. See this fully explained and illustrated by himself, **#Jer 18:7-9.**

Verse 30. **For as ye in times past]** The apostle pursues his argument in favour of the restoration of the Jews. *As ye, Gentiles, in times past*-for many ages back.

**Have not believed]** Were in a state of alienation from God, *yet* not so as to be totally and for ever excluded.

**Have now obtained mercy]** For ye are now taken into the kingdom of the Messiah; through *their unbelief*-by that method which, in destroying the Jewish *peculiarity*, and fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant, has occasioned the unbelief and obstinate opposition of the Jews.

Verse 31. **Even so have these also]** In like manner the Jews are, through their infidelity, shut out of the kingdom of God:—

**That through your mercy]** But this exclusion will not be *everlasting*; but this will serve to open a new scene when, through farther displays of mercy to you Gentiles, *they also may obtain mercy*-shall be received into the kingdom of God again; and this shall take place whenever they shall consent to acknowledge the Lord Jesus, and see it their privilege to be fellow heirs with the Gentiles of the grace of life.

As sure, therefore, as the Jews were *once* in the kingdom, and the Gentiles were not; as sure as the Gentiles *are now* in the kingdom, and the Jews are not; so surely will the Jews be brought back into that kingdom.



Verse 32. **For God hath concluded them all in unbelief]** *συνέκλεισε γὰρ ὁ θεός*, God hath *shut* or *locked* them all up under unbelief. This refers to the guilty state of both Jews and Gentiles. They had all broken God's law-the Jews, the written law; the Gentiles, the law written in their hearts; see **#Ro 1:19, 20; 2:14, 15**. They are represented here as having been *accused* if their transgressions; *tried* at God's bar; found guilty on being tried; *condemned* to the death they had merited; *remanded* to prison, till the sovereign will, relative to their execution, should be announced; *shut* or *locked up*, under the jailer, *unbelief*; and there both continued in the same state, awaiting the execution of their sentence: but God, in his own compassion, moved by no merit in either party, caused a *general pardon* by the Gospel to be proclaimed to *all*. The Jews have refused to receive this pardon on the terms which God has proposed it, and therefore continue *locked up* under *unbelief*. The *Gentiles* have welcomed the offers of grace, and are delivered out of their prison. But, as the offers of mercy continue to be made to all indiscriminately, the time will come when the Jews, seeing the vast accession of the Gentile world to the kingdom of the Messiah, and the glorious privileges which they in consequence enjoy, shall also lay hold on the hope set before them, and thus become with the Gentiles one flock under one shepherd and bishop of all their souls. The same figure is used **#Ga 3:22, 23**. *But the Scripture hath concluded* *συνέκλεισεν*, locked up *all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Christ Jesus, might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept, ἐφρουρούμεθα*, we were guarded as in a strong hold, *under the law; shut up, συγκεκλεισμένοι*, locked up together *unto the faith which* should afterwards be revealed. It is a fine and well chosen metaphor in both places, and forcibly expresses the guilty, helpless, wretched state of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

Verse 33. **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!]** This is a very proper conclusion of the whole preceding discourse. *Wisdom* may here refer to the *designs* of God; *knowledge*, to the *means* which he employs to accomplish these designs. The *designs* are the offspring of infinite wisdom, and therefore they are all right; the *means* are the most proper, as being the choice of an infinite knowledge that cannot err; we may safely credit the goodness of the *design*, founded in infinite *wisdom*; we may rely on the due accomplishment of the *end*, because the *means* are chosen and applied by infinite knowledge and skill.

Verse 34. **For who hath known the mind of the Lord?]** Who can pretend to penetrate the counsels of God, or fathom the reasons of his conduct? His designs and his counsels are like himself, *infinite*; and, consequently, inscrutable. It is strange that, with such a scripture as this before their eyes, men should sit down and coolly and positively write about counsels and decrees of God formed from all eternity, of which they speak with as much confidence and decision as if *they* had formed a part of the council of the Most High, and had been with him in the beginning of his ways! A certain writer, (Mr. Perkins,) after having entered into all these counsels, and drawn out his *black-lined* scheme of absolute and eternal reprobation, with all its causes and effects; and then his *light-lined* scheme of absolute and eternal ELECTION, with all its causes and effects, all deduced in the most regular and graduated order, link by link; concludes with **#Ro 11:33**: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how UNSEARCHABLE are his judgments, and his ways PAST FINDING OUT!* But this writer forgot that *he* had *searched out God's judgments* in the one case, and *found out his ways* in the other: and that he had given, as a proof of the success of his researches, a complete exhibition of the *whole scheme*! This conduct is worthy of more than mere reprehension; and yet he who differs from such opinions gives, in the apprehension of some, this proof of his being included in some of the links of the *black list*! We may rest with the conviction,



that God is as *merciful* and *good* in all his ways, as he is *wise* and *just*. But as we cannot comprehend him, neither can we his operations, it is our place, who are the objects of his infinite mercy and kindness, to adore in silence, and to obey with alacrity and delight.

Verse 35. **Or, who hath first given to him]** Who can pretend to have any *demands* upon God? To whom is he *indebted*? Have either Jews or Gentiles any *right* to his blessings? May not he bestow his favours *as* he pleases, and to *whom* he pleases? Does he do any injustice to the *Jews* in choosing the *Gentiles*? And was it because he was under obligation to the *Gentiles* that he has chosen them in the place of the *Jews*? Let him who has any *claim* on God prefer it; and he shall be *compensated*.

But how can the CREATOR be indebted to the *creature*? How can the CAUSE be dependent on the *effect*? How can the AUTHOR of *providence*, and the FATHER of *every good and perfect gift*, be under obligation to *them* for whom he provides, and who are wholly *dependent* on his bounty?

Verse 36. **For of him, &c.]** This is so far from being the case, *for* ἐξ αὐτοῦ, OF *him*, as the original designer and author; *and* δι' αὐτοῦ, BY *him*, as the prime and efficient cause; *and* εἰς αὐτόν, TO *him*, as the ultimate end for the manifestation of his eternal glory and goodness, *are all things in universal nature*, through the whole compass of *time* and *eternity*.

The Emperor *Marcus Antoninus* (εἰς ἑαυτόν lib. iv.), has a saying very much like this of St. Paul, which it is very probable he borrowed from this epistle to the Romans. Speaking of *nature*, whom he addresses as God, he says, ὦ φύσις ἐκ σοῦ πάντα, ἐν σοὶ πάντα, εἰς σε πάντα; O, *Nature*! OF *thee* are all things; IN *thee* are all things; TO *thee* are all things. Several of the Gentile philosophers had expressions of the same import, as may be seen in *Wetstein's* quotations.

**To whom be glory]** And let him have the praise of all his works, from the hearts and mouths of all his intelligent creatures, *for ever*-throughout all the generations of men. *Amen*-so be it! Let this be established for ever!

I. THE apostle considers the designs of God inscrutable, and his mode of governing the world incomprehensible. His designs, schemes, and ends are all infinite, and consequently unfathomable. It is impossible to account for the dispensations either of his justice or mercy. He does things under both these characters which far surpass the comprehension of men. But though his dispensations are a great deep, yet they are never self-contradictory: though they far surpass our *reason*, yet they never *contradict* reason; nor are they ever *opposite* to those ideas which God has implanted in man, of goodness, justice, mercy, and truth. But it is worthy of remark, that we can more easily account for the dispensations of his *justice* than we can for the dispensations of his *mercy*. We can every where see ten thousand reasons why he should display his justice; but scarcely can we find *one* reason why he should display his mercy. And yet, these displays of mercy for which we can scarcely find a reason, are infinitely greater and more numerous than his displays of justice, for which the reasons are, in a vast variety of cases, as obvious as they are multiplied. The sacrifice of Christ is certainly an infinite reason why God should extend, as he does, his mercy to all men; but Jesus Christ is the *gift of God's love*: who can account for the *love* that gave him to redeem a fallen world? The Jews have fallen under the displeasure of Divine justice: why they should be objects of this displeasure

is at once seen in their ingratitude, disobedience, unbelief, and rebellion. But a most especial providence has watched over them, and preserved them in all their dispersions for 1700 years: who can account for *this*? Again, these very persons have a most positive promise of a future deliverance, both great and glorious: *why* should this be? The Gentile world was long left without a Divine revelation, while the Jews enjoyed one: who can account for *this*? The Jews are now cast out of favour, in a certain sense, and the reasons of it are sufficiently obvious; and the Gentiles, without any apparent reason, are taken into favour. In all these things *his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out!*

II. Once more: Let it be remarked that, although God is every where promising and bestowing the greatest and most ennobling privileges, together with an eternal and ineffable glory, for which we can give no reason but his own endless goodness, through the death of his Son; yet, in no case does he remove those privileges, nor exclude from this glory, but where the reasons are most obvious to the meanest capacity.

III. This epistle has been thought by some to afford proofs that God, by an eternal decree, had predestinated to eternal perdition millions of millions of human souls before they had any existence, except in his own purpose, and for no other reason but his sovereign pleasure! But such a *decree* can be no more found in this *book*, than such a *disposition* in the *mind* of Him who is the *perfection*, as he is the *model*, of wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, and truth. May God save the reader from profaning his name, by suppositions at once so monstrous and absurd!

# ROMANS

## CHAPTER XII.

*Such displays of God's mercy as Jews and Gentiles have received should induce them to consecrate themselves to Him; and not be conformed to the world, 1, 2. Christians are exhorted to think meanly of themselves, 3. And each to behave himself properly in the office which he has received from God, 4-8; Various important moral duties recommended, 9-18. We must not avenge ourselves, but overcome evil with good, 19-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XII.

The apostle having now finished the *doctrinal* part of this epistle, proceeds to the *practical*; and here it may be necessary to take a view of his arguments in the preceding chapters.

The *election, calling, and justification* of the believing Gentiles, and their being admitted into the kingdom and covenant of God, and having an interest in all the privileges and honours of his children. (1.) That they have a clear and substantial title to all these he has proved in Rom. 1, 2, and 3. (2.) That this right is set on the same footing with Abraham's title to the blessings of the covenant he proves Rom. 6. (3.) That it gives us a title to privileges and blessings, as great as any the Jews could glory in, by virtue of that covenant, **#Ro 5:1-12**. (4.) He goes still higher, and shows that our being interested in the gift and grace of God in Christ Jesus is perfectly agreeable to the grace which he has bestowed upon all mankind, in delivering them from that *death of the body* brought on them by Adams' transgression, **#Ro 5:12-21**. (5.) He fully explains, both with regard to the Gentiles and Jews, the nature of the Gospel constitution in relation to its obligations to holiness, and the advantages it gives for encouragement, obedience, and support, under the severest trials and persecutions, Rom. 6, 7, 8. (6.) As to the pretences of the Jews, that "God was bound by express promise to continue them as his only people for ever, and that this was directly inconsistent with the election and calling of the Gentiles, on the condition of *faith* alone;" he demonstrates that the rejection of the Jews is consistent with the truth of God's word, and with his righteousness: he shows the true cause and reason of their rejection, and concludes with an admirable discourse upon the extent and duration of it; which he closes with adoration of the Divine wisdom in its various dispensations, Rom. 9, 10, 11. Thus, having cleared this important subject with surprising judgment, and the nicest art and skill in writing, he now proceeds, after his usual manner in his epistles and the apostolic method of preaching, to inculcate various *Christian duties*, and to exhort to that *temper* of mind and conduct of life which are suitable to the profession of the Gospel, and the enjoyment of its privileges.-Dr. Taylor.

Verse 1. **I beseech you therefore, brethren]** This address is probably intended both for the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*; though some suppose that the Jews are addressed in the first verse, the Gentiles in the second.

**By the mercies of God!]** Διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ By the *tender mercies* or *compassions* of God, such as a tender father shows to his refractory children; who, on their humiliation, is easily persuaded to forgive their offences. The word oiktirmoj comes from οἰκτος, *compassion*; and that

from [εἰκώ](#), to *yield*; because he that has *compassionate* feelings is easily prevailed on to do a kindness, or remit an injury.

**That ye present your bodies]** A metaphor taken from bringing sacrifices to the altar of God. The person offering picked out the *choicest* of his flock, brought it to the altar, and *presented* it there as an atonement for his sin. They are exhorted to give themselves up in the spirit of sacrifice; to be as wholly the Lord's property as the *whole burnt-offering* was, no part being devoted to any other use.

**A living sacrifice]** In opposition to those *dead* sacrifices which they were in the habit of offering while in their Jewish state; and that they should have the lusts of the flesh *mortified*, that they might *live* to God.

**Holy]** Without *spot* or *blemish*; referring still to the sacrifice required by the law.

**Acceptable unto God]** [εὐαρεστον](#) The *sacrifice* being *perfect* in its *kind*, and the *intention* of the offerer being such that both can be *acceptable* and *well pleasing* to God, who searches the heart. All these phrases are *sacrificial*, and show that there must be a complete surrender of the person-the *body*, the whole man, mind and flesh, to be given to God; and that he is to consider himself no more his own, but the entire property of his Maker.

**Your reasonable service.]** Nothing can be more consistent with reason than that the work of God should glorify its Author. We are not our *own*, we are the property of the Lord, by the right of creation and redemption; and it would be as *unreasonable* as it would be *wicked* not to live to his glory, in strict obedience to his will. The *reasonable service*, [λογικὴν λατρείαν](#), of the apostle, may refer to the difference between the *Jewish* and *Christian* worship. The former religious service consisted chiefly in its *sacrifices*, which were [δι' ἀλογων](#), of *irrational* creatures, i.e. the lambs, rams, kids, bulls, goats, &c., which were offered under the law. The Christian service or worship is [λογικῇ](#), *rational*, because performed according to the true intent and meaning of the law; the heart and soul being engaged in the service. He alone lives the life of a *fool* and a *madman* who lives the life of a sinner against God; for, in sinning against his Maker he wrongs his own soul, loves death, and rewards evil unto himself.

**Reasonable service**, [λογικὴν λατρείαν](#), "a religious service according to reason," one *rationally performed*. The Romanists make this distinction between [λατρεία](#), and [δουλεία](#), *latreia* and *douleia*, (or *dulia*, as they corruptly write it,) *worship* and *service*, which they say signify *two kinds of religious worship*; the *first* proper to GOD, the *other* communicated to the *creatures*. But [δουλεία](#), *douleia*, *services*, is used by the Septuagint to express the *Divine worship*. See [#De 13:4](#); [#Jud 2:7](#); [#1Sa 7:3](#), and [#1Sa 12:10](#): and in the New Testament, [#Mt 6:24](#); [#Lu 6:23](#); [#Ro 16:18](#); [#Col 3:24](#). The angel refused [δουλείαν](#), *douleia*, [#Re 22:7](#), because he was [συνδoulos](#) *sundoulos*, a *fellow servant*; and the Divine worship is more *frequently* expressed by this word [δουλεία](#), *douleia*, *service*, than by [λατρεία](#), *latreia*, *worship*. The first is thirty-nine times in the Old and New Testament ascribed unto God, the other about thirty times; and *latreia*, worship or service, is given unto the *creatures*, as in [#Le 23:7, 8, 21](#); [#Nu 28:18](#); yea, the word signifies *cruel* and *base* bondage, [#De 28:48](#): once in the New Testament it is taken for the *worship* of the *creatures*, [#Ro 1:25](#). The

worshipping of *idols* is forbidden under the word λατρεία, *latreia*, thirty-four times in the Old Testament, and once in the New, as above; and twenty-three times under the term δουλεία, *doaleia*, in the Old Testament; and St. Paul uses δουλεύειν θεῷ, and λατρεύειν θεῷ indifferently, for the *worship we owe to God*. See #Ro 1:9, 25; 12:1, #Ga 4:8, 9; #1Th 1:9; #Mt 6:24. And Ludouicus Vives, a learned *Romanist*, has proved out of Suidas, Xenophon, and Volla, that these two words are usually taken the *one* for the *other*, therefore the popish distinction, that the first signifies "the religious worship due only to God," and the second, "that which is given to angels, saints, and men," is unlearned and false.-See Leigh's *Crit. Sacra*.

Verse 2. **And be not conformed to this world]** By *this world*, αἰῶνι τούτῳ, may be understood that *present state* of things both among the Jews and Gentiles; the customs and fashions of the people who then *lived*, the Gentiles particularly, who had neither the *power* nor the *form* of godliness; though some think that the Jewish economy, frequently termed עולם הזה *olam hazzeh*, this world, this peculiar state of things, is alone intended. And the apostle warns them against reviving usages that Christ had abolished: this exhortation still continues in full force. The world that *now is*-THIS *present state of things*, is as much opposed to the spirit of genuine Christianity as the world *then* was. Pride, luxury, vanity, extravagance in dress, and riotous living, prevail *now*, as they did *then*, and are as unworthy of a Christian's pursuit as they are injurious to his soul, and hateful in the sight of God.

**Be ye transformed]** Μεταμορφουσθε, *Be ye metamorphosed, transfigured*, appear as *new persons*, and with *new habits*, as God has given you a new form of worship, so that ye serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. The word implies a *radical, thorough, and universal change*, both *outward* and *inward*. SENECA, *Epis. vi*, shows us the force of this word when used in a moral sense. *Sentio*, says he, *non EMENDARI me tantum, sed TRANSFIGURARI*; "I perceive myself not to be amended merely, but to be transformed:" i. e. entirely renewed.

**By the renewing of your mind]** Let the inward change produce the outward. Where the *spirit*, the temper, and disposition of the *mind*, #Eph 4:23, are not *renewed*, an outward change is of but *little worth*, and but of *short standing*.

**That ye may prove]** εἰς το δοκιμαζειν, That ye may have *practical proof* and *experimental knowledge of, the will of God*-of his purpose and determination, which is *good* in itself; infinitely so. *Acceptable*, ευαπестον, *well pleasing to and well received* by every mind that is renewed and transformed.

**And perfect]** τελειον, Finished and complete: when the mind is renewed, and the whole life changed, then the will of God is perfectly fulfilled; for this is its grand design in reference to every human being.

These words are supposed by Schoettgen to refer entirely to the *Jewish law*. The Christians were to renounce *this world*-the Jewish state of things; to be *transformed*, by having their minds enlightened in the pure and simple Christian worship, that they might prove the grand characteristic difference between the two covenants: the latter being *good* in opposition to the *statutes* which were not *good*, #Eze 20:25; *acceptable*, in opposition to those sacrifices and offerings which God *would*

*not accept*, as it is written, **#Ps 40:6-8**; and perfect, in opposition to that system which was *imperfect*, and which made nothing perfect, and was only the *shadow of good things to come*. There are both ingenuity and probability in this view of the subject.

Verse 3. **Through the grace given unto me]** By the grace given St. Paul most certainly means his apostolical *office*, by which he had the *authority*, not only to preach the Gospel, but also to rule the Church of Christ. This is the meaning of the word, **η χάρις**, in **#Eph 3:8**: *Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given-is conceded this office or employment immediately by God himself; that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

**Not to think-more highly]** **μη υπερφρονειν**, *Not to act proudly*; to arrogate nothing to himself on account of any grace he had received, or of any office committed to him.

**But to think soberly]** **αλλα φρονειν εις το σωφρονειν**. The reader will perceive here a sort of *paronomasia*, or play upon words: **φρονειν**, from **φρην**, the *mind*, signifies to *think, mind, relish, to be of opinion*, &c.; and **σωφρονειν** from **σοος**, *sound*, and **φρην**, the *mind*, signifies to be of a *sound mind*; to *think discreetly, modestly, humbly*. Let no man think himself more or greater than God has made him; and let him know that what ever he *is* or *has* of good or excellence, he has it *from God*; and that the glory belongs to the giver, and not to him who has received the gift.

**Measure of faith.]** **μετρον πιστεως**. It is very likely, as Dr. Moore has conjectured, that the **πιστις**, *faith*, here used, means the Christian religion; and the *measure*, the degree of *knowledge* and *experience* which each had received in it, and the power this gave him of being useful in the Church of God. See **#Ro 12:6**.

Verse 4. **For as we have many members]** As the human body consists of many parts, each having its respective office, and all contributing to the perfection and support of the whole; each being indispensably necessary in the place which it occupies, and each equally useful though performing a different function;

Verse 5. **So we, being many]** We who are members of the Church of Christ, which is considered the *body* of which he is the *head*, have various offices assigned to us, according to the measure of grace, faith and religious knowledge which we possess; and although each has a different office, and qualifications suitable to that office, yet all belong to the *same body*; and each has as much need of the help of another as that other has of his; therefore, let there be neither *pride* on the one hand, nor *envy* on the other. The same metaphor, in nearly the same words, is used in *Synopsis Sohar*, page 13. "As man is divided into various members and joints, united among themselves, and raised by gradations above each other, and collectively compose one body; so all created things are members orderly disposed, and altogether constitute one body. In like manner the law, distributed into various articulations, constitutes but *one body*." See *Schoettgen*.

Verse 6. **Having then gifts differing, &c.]** As the goodness of God, with this view of our mutual subserviency and usefulness, has endowed us with different gifts and qualifications, let each apply himself to the diligent improvement of his particular office and talent, and modestly keep within the bounds of it, not exalting himself or despising others.



**Whether prophecy]** That *prophecy*, in the New Testament, often means the gift of *exhorting, preaching, or of expounding the Scriptures*, is evident from many places in the *Gospels, Acts, and St. Paul's Epistles*, see **#1Co 11:4, 5**; and especially **#1Co 14:3**: *He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort*. This was the proper office of a preacher; and it is to the exercise of this office that the apostle refers in the whole of the chapter from which the above quotations are made. See also **#Lu 1:76; 7:28; #Ac 15:32; #1Co 14:29**. I think the apostle uses the term in the same sense here—Let every man who has the gift of preaching and interpreting the Scriptures do it in proportion to the grace and light he has received from God, and in no case *arrogate* to himself knowledge which he has not received; let him not esteem himself more highly on account of this gift, or affect to be wise above what is written, or indulge himself in fanciful interpretations of the word of God.

Dr. Taylor observes that the *measure of faith*, **#Ro 12:3**, and the *proportion of faith*, **#Ro 12:6**, seem not to relate to the degree of any gift considered in itself, but rather in the relation and proportion which it bore to the gifts of others; for it is plain that he is here exhorting every man to keep soberly within his own sphere. It is natural to suppose that the new converts might be puffed up with the several gifts that were bestowed upon them; and every one might be forward to magnify his own to the disparagement of others: therefore the apostle advises them to keep each within his proper sphere; to know and observe the just measure and proportion of the gift *intrusted* to him, not to gratify his pride but to edify the Church.

The *αναλογια της πιστεως*, which we here translate the *proportion of faith*, and which some render the *analogy of faith*, signifies in grammar "the similar declension of similar words;" but in Scriptural matters it has been understood to mean the *general and consistent plan or scheme of doctrines delivered in the Scriptures*; where every thing bears its due relation and proportion to another. Thus the death of Christ is commensurate in its merits to the evils produced by the fall of Adam. The doctrine of justification by *faith* bears the strictest analogy or proportion to the grace of Christ and the helpless, guilty, condemned state of man: whereas the doctrine of *justification by WORKS* is out of all analogy to the demerit of sin, the perfection of the law, the holiness of God, and the miserable, helpless state of man. This may be a good general view of the subject; but when we come to inquire what those mean by the *analogy of faith* who are most frequent in the use of the term, we shall find that it means neither more nor less than *their own creed*; and though they tell you that their doctrines are to be examined by the Scriptures, yet they give you roundly to know that you are to understand these Scriptures in precisely the same way as *they* have interpreted them. "*To the law and to the testimony*," says Dr. Campbell, "is the common cry; only every one, the better to secure the decision on the side he has espoused, would have you previously resolve to put no sense whatever on the *law and the testimony* but what his favourite doctrine will admit. Thus they run on in a shuffling, circular sort of argument, which, though they studiously avoid exposing, is, when dragged into the open light, neither more nor less than this; 'you are to try our doctrine by the Scriptures only; but then you are to be very careful that you explain the Scripture solely by our doctrine.' A wonderful plan of trial, which begins with giving judgment, and ends with examining the proof, wherein the whole skill and ingenuity of the judges are to be exerted in wresting the evidence so as to give it the appearance of supporting the sentence pronounced before hand." See Dr. Campbell's Dissertations on the Gospels, Diss. iv. sect. 14, vol. i, page 146, 8vo. edit., where several other sensible remarks may be found.



Verse 7. **Or ministry]** *διακονια* simply means the *office* of a *deacon*; and what this office was, see in Clarke's note on "Ac 6:4", where the subject is largely discussed.

**Or he that teacheth]** The teacher, *διδασκαλος*, was a person whose office it was to instruct others, who thereby catechizing, or simply explaining the grand truths of Christianity.

Verse 8. **Or he that exhorteth]** *ὁ παρακαλων*, The person who admonished and reprehended the unruly or disorderly; and who supported the weak and comforted the penitents, and those who were under heaviness through manifold temptations.

**He that giveth]** He who distributeth the alms of the Church, *with simplicity*-being influenced by no *partiality*, but dividing to each according to the *necessity* of his case.

**He that ruleth]** *ὁ προϊσταμενος*, He that presides over a particular business; but as the verb *προισταμαι* also signifies to *defend* or *patronize*, it is probably used here to signify receiving and providing for *strangers*, and especially the persecuted who were obliged to leave their own homes, and were destitute, afflicted, and tormented. It might also imply the persons whose business it was to receive and entertain the apostolical teachers who travelled from place to place, establishing and confirming the Churches. In this sense the word *προστατις* is applied to *Phoebe*, #Ro 16:2: *She hath been a SUCCOURER of many, and of myself also*. The apostle directs that this office should be executed with diligence, that such destitute persons should have their necessities as promptly and as amply supplied as possible.

**He that showeth mercy]** Let the person who is called to perform any *act of compassion* or *mercy* to the *wretched* do it, not grudgingly nor of necessity, but from a spirit of pure benevolence and sympathy. The poor are often both wicked and worthless: and, if those who are called to minister to them as stewards, overseers, &c., do not take care, they will get their hearts hardened with the frequent proofs they will have of deception, lying, idleness, &c. And on this account it is that so many of those who have been called to minister to the poor in parishes, workhouses, and religious societies, when they come to relinquish their employment find that many of their moral feelings have been considerably blunted; and perhaps the only reward they get for their services is the character of being *hard-hearted*. If whatever is done in this way be not done unto the *Lord*, it can never be done with *cheerfulness*.

Verse 9. **Let love be without dissimulation.]** *ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυποκριτος* Have no *hypocritical* love; let not your love wear a mask; make no empty professions. Love God and your neighbour; and, by obedience to the one and acts of benevolence to the other, show that your love is *sincere*.

**Abhor that which is evil]** *ἀποστύγουντες τὸ πονηρον* Hate sin as you would hate that *hell* to which it leads. *στύγω* signifies to *hate* or *detest with horror*; the preposition *απο* greatly strengthens the meaning. *στύξ*, *Styx*, was a feigned river in hell by which the gods were wont to swear, and if any of them falsified this oath he was deprived of his nectar and ambrosia for a hundred years; hence the river was reputed to be *hateful*, and *στύγω* signified *to be as hateful as hell*. Two MSS. read *μισούντες*, which signifies *hating* in the lowest sense of the term. The word in the text is abundantly more expressive, and our translation is both nervous and appropriate.

**Cleave to that which is good.]** κολλωμενοι τω αγαθω· Be CEMENTED or GLUED to that which is good; so the word literally signifies. Have an unalterable attachment to whatever leads to God, and contributes to the welfare of your fellow creatures.

Verse 10. **Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love]** It is difficult to give a simple translation of the original: τη φιλαδελφια εις αλληλους φιλοστοργοι. The word φιλαδελφια signifies that affectionate regard which every Christian should feel for another, as being members of the same mystical body: hence it is emphatically termed the *love of the brethren*. When William Penn, of deservedly famous memory, made a treaty with the Indians in North America, and purchased from them a large *woody* tract, which, after its own *nature* and his *name*, he called *Pennsylvania*, he built a city on it, and peopled it with Christians of his own denomination, and called the city from the word in the text, φιλαδελφια, PHILADELPHIA; an appellation which it *then* bore with strict propriety: and still it bears the *name*.

The word φιλοστοργος, which we translate *kindly affectioned*, from φιλος and στοργη, signifies that *tender* and *indescribable affection* which a *mother bears to her child*, and which almost all creatures manifest towards their young; and the word φιλος, or φιλεω, joined to it, signifies a delight in it. Feel the *tenderest* affection towards each other, and delight to feel it. "Love a brother Christian with the affection of a natural brother."

**In honour preferring one another]** The meaning appears to be this: Consider all your brethren as more worthy than yourself; and let neither grief nor envy affect your mind at seeing another *honoured* and yourself *neglected*. This is a hard lesson, and very few persons learn it thoroughly. If we wish to see our brethren honoured, still it is with the secret condition in our own minds that we be honoured *more* than they. We have no objection to the *elevation* of others, providing we may be at the *head*. But who can bear even to be what he calls *neglected*? I once heard the following conversation between two persons, which the reader will pardon my relating in this place, as it appears to be rather in point, and is worthy of regard. "I know not," said one, "that I neglect to do any thing in my power to promote the interest of true religion in this place, and yet I seem to be held in very little repute, scarcely any person even noticing me." To which the other replied: "My good friend, set yourself down for *nothing*, and if any person takes you for *something* it will be all *clear gain*." I thought this a queer saying: but how full of meaning and common sense! Whether the object of this good counsel was profited by it I cannot tell; but *I* looked on it and received instruction.

Verse 11. **Not slothful in business]** That God, who *forbade* working on the *seventh* day, has, by the same authority, *enjoined* it on the other *six days*. He who neglects to labour during the *week* is as culpable as he is who works on the *Sabbath*. An idle, slothful person can never be a Christian.

**Fervent in spirit]** τω πνευματι ζεοντες· Do nothing at any time but what is to the glory of God, and do every thing as unto him; and in every thing let your *hearts* be engaged. Be always in *earnest*, and let your *heart* ever accompany your hand.

**Serving the Lord]** Ever considering that his eye is upon you, and that you are accountable to him for all that you do, and that you should do every thing so as to please him. In order to this there must be *simplicity* in the INTENTION, and *purity* in the AFFECTIONS.

Instead of *τω κυριω δουλευοντες*, *serving the Lord*, several MSS., as DFG, and many editions, have *καιρω δουλευοντες*, *serving the time*—embracing the opportunity. This reading *Griesbach* has received into the text, and most critics contend for its authenticity. Except the *Codes Claromontanus*, the *Codex Augiensis*, and the *Codex Bærnierianus*, the first a MS. of the seventh or eighth century, the others of the ninth or tenth, marked in *Griesbach* by the letters DFG, all the other MSS. of this epistle have *κυριω*, *the Lord*; a reading in which all the *versions* concur. *καιρω*, *the time*, is not found in the two *original editions*; that of *Complutum*, in 1514, which is the *first* edition of the Greek Testament ever *printed*; and that of *Erasmus*, in 1516, which is the first edition *published*; the former having been suppressed for several years after it was finished at the press. As in the ancient MSS. the word *κυριω* is written *contractedly*, *ΚΩ*, some appear to have read it *καιρω* instead of *κυριω*; but I confess I do not see sufficient reason after all that the critics have said, to depart from the common reading.

Verse 12. **Rejoicing in hope]** Of that glory of God that to each faithful follower of Christ shall shortly be revealed.

**Patient in tribulation]** Remembering that what you suffer as Christians you suffer for Christ's sake; and it is to his honour, and the honour of your Christian profession, that you suffer it with an even mind.

**Continuing instant in prayer]** *προσκατερουντες*. Making the most fervent and intense application to the throne of grace for the light and power of the Holy Spirit; without which you can neither *abhor evil*, *do good*, *love the brethren*, entertain a comfortable *hope*, nor bear up patiently under the *tribulations* and ills of life.

Verse 13. **Distributing to the necessity of saints]** Relieve your poor brethren according to the power which God has given you. Do good unto all men, but especially to them which are of the household of faith. Instead of *χρειαις*, *necessities*, some ancient MSS. have *μνημειαις*, *memorials*; distributing to the memorials of the saints, which some interpret as referring to saints that were *absent*; as if he had said: Do not *forget* those in other Churches who have a claim on your bounty. But I really cannot see any good sense which this various reading can make in the text; I therefore follow the common reading.

**Given to hospitality.]** *την φιλοξενιαν διωκοντες*, *pursuing hospitality*, or the duty of *entertaining strangers*. A very necessary virtue in ancient times, when houses of public accommodation were exceedingly scarce. This exhortation might have for its object the apostles, who were all itinerants; and in many cases the Christians, flying before the face of persecution. This virtue is highly becoming in all Christians, and especially in all Christian *ministers*, who have the *means* of relieving a brother in distress, or of succouring the poor wherever he may find them. But providing for *strangers in distress* is the proper meaning of the term; and to be *forward* to do this is the *spirit* of the duty.

Verse 14. **Bless them which persecute you]** *ευλογειτε*, Give *good words*, or *pray* for them that give you *bad words*, *καταρασθε*, who make *dire imprecations* against you. *Bless* them, *pray* for them,

and on no account curse them, whatever the provocation may be. Have the loving, forgiving mind that was in your Lord.

**Verse 15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice]** Take a lively interest in the prosperity of others. Let it be a matter of rejoicing to you when you hear of the health, prosperity, or happiness of any brother.

**Weep with them that weep.]** Labour after a *compassionate* or *sympathizing* mind. Let your heart feel for the distressed; enter into their sorrows, and bear a part of their burdens. It is a fact, attested by universal experience, that by sympathy a man may receive into his own affectionate feelings a measure of the distress of his friend, and that his friend does find himself relieved in the same proportion as the other has entered into his griefs. "But how do you account for this?" I do not account for it at all, it depends upon certain laws of nature, the principles of which have not been as yet duly developed.

**Verse 16. Be of the same mind]** Live in a state of continual harmony and concord, and pray for the same good for all which you desire for yourselves.

**Mind not high things]** Be not ambitious; affect nothing above your station; do not court the rich nor the powerful; do not pass by the *poor man* to pay your court to the *great man*; do not affect *titles* or worldly *distinctions*; much less sacrifice your conscience for them. The attachment to *high things* and *high men* is the vice of *little, shallow minds*. However, it argues one important fact, that such persons are conscious that they are of *no worth* and of *no consequence* in THEMSELVES, and they seek to render themselves observable and to gain a little credit by their endeavours to *associate* themselves with men of *rank* and *fortune*, and if possible to get into honourable *employments*; and, if this cannot be attained, they affect honourable *TITLES*.

**But condescend to men of low estate.]** Be a companion of the humble, and pass through life with as little noise and *show* as possible. Let the poor, godly man be your chief companion; and learn from his humility and piety to be humble and godly. The term *συναπαγομενοι*, which we translate *condescend*, from *συν*, *together*, and *απαγω*, *to lead*, signifies *to be led, carried, or dragged away to prison with another*; and points out the state in which the primitive Christians were despised and rejected of men, and often led forth to prison and death. False or man-pleasing professors would endeavour to escape all this disgrace and danger by getting into the favour of the great, the worldly, and the irreligious. There have not been wanting, in all ages of the Church, persons who, losing the savour of Divine things from their own souls by drinking into a worldly spirit, have endeavoured to shun the reproach of the cross by renouncing the company of the godly, speaking evil of the way of life, and perhaps sitting down in the chair of the scorner with apostates like themselves. And yet, strange to tell, these men will keep up a form of godliness! for a decent outside is often necessary to enable them to secure the ends of their ambition.

**Be not wise in your own conceits.]** Be not puffed up with an opinion of your own consequence; for this will prove that the consequence itself is *imaginary*. *Be not wise*, *παρ' εαυτοις*, *by yourselves*-do not suppose that wisdom and discernment dwell alone with *you*. Believe that you stand in need both of help and instruction from others.

Verse 17. **Recompense, &c.]** Do not take notice of every little injury you may sustain. Do not be *litigious*. Beware of too nice a sense of your own honour; intolerable pride is at the bottom of this. The motto of the royal arms of Scotland is in direct opposition to this Divine direction—*Nemo me impune lacesset*, of which "I render evil for evil to every man," is a pretty literal translation. This is both antichristian and abominable, whether in a *state* or in an *individual*.

**Provide things honest]** Be prudent, be cautious, neither *eat, drink*, nor *wear*, but as you pay for every thing. "Live not on *trust*, for that is the way to pay double;" and by this means the *poor* are still kept *poor*. He who *takes credit*, even for food or raiment, when he has no probable means of defraying the debt, is a *dishonest* man. It is no sin to die through lack of the necessities of life when the providence of God has denied the means of support; but it is a *sin* to take up goods without the probability of being able to pay for them. Poor man! suffer poverty a little; perhaps God is only trying thee for a time; and who can tell if he will not turn again thy captivity. Labour hard to live honestly; if God still appear to withhold his providential blessing, do not despair; leave it all to him; do not make a sinful choice; he cannot err. He will bless *thy* poverty, while he curses the ungodly man's blessings.

Verse 18. **If it be possible]** To live in a state of peace with one's neighbours, friends, and even family, is often very difficult. But the man who loves God must labour after this, for it is indispensably necessary even for his own sake. A man cannot have broils and misunderstandings with others, without having his own peace very materially disturbed: he must, to be happy, be at peace with all men, whether they will be at peace with him or not. The apostle knew that it would be difficult to get into and maintain such a state of peace, and this his own words amply prove: *And if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably*. Though it be but barely *possible*, labour after it.

Verse 19. **Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves]** Ye are the children of God, and he loves you; and because he loves you he will permit nothing to be done to you that he will not turn to your advantage. Never take the execution of the law into your own hands; rather suffer injuries. The Son of man is come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save: be of the same spirit. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. It is the part of a noble mind to bear up under *unmerited* disgrace; *little minds* are litigious and quarrelsome.

**Give place unto wrath]** *δοτε τοπον τη οργη*. Leave room for the civil magistrate to do his duty, he holds the sword for this purpose; and if *he* be unfaithful to the trust reposed in him by the state, leave the matter to God, who is the righteous judge: for by avenging yourselves you take your cause both out of the hands of the civil magistrate and out of the hands of God. I believe this to be the meaning of *give place to wrath, οργη, punishment*; the penalty which the law, properly executed, will inflict. This is well expressed by the author of the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, **Eccl. 19:17**: *Admonish thy neighbour before thou threaten him, and, not being, angry, GIVE PLACE TO THE LAW OF THE MOST HIGH*.

**Vengeance is mine]** This fixes the meaning of the apostle, and at once shows that the exhortation, *Rather give place to wrath or punishment*, means, Leave the matter to the judgment of God; it is *his law* that in this case is broken; and to him the infliction of deserved punishment

belongs. Some think it means, "Yield a little to a man when in a violent passion, for the sake of peace, until he grow cooler."

**I will repay]** In my own time and in my own way. But he gives the sinner space to repent, and this longsuffering leads to salvation. Dr. Taylor, after Dr. Benson, conjectures that the apostle in these directions had his eye upon the indignities which the *Jews*, and probably the *Christians* too, (for they were often confounded by the heathen,) suffered by the *edict* of *Claudius*, mentioned **#Ac 18:2**, which "commanded all Jews to depart from Rome." Upon this occasion *Aquila* and *Priscilla* removed to Corinth, where Paul found them, and dwelt with them a considerable time. No doubt they gave him a full account of the state of the Christian Church at Rome, and of every thing relating to the late persecution under *Claudius*. That emperor's edict probably died with him, if it were not repealed before, and then the *Jews* and *Christians* (if the *Christians* were also expelled) returned again to Rome; for *Aquila* and *Priscilla* were there when Paul wrote this epistle, **#Ro 16:3**, which was in the fourth year of *Nero*, successor to *Claudius*.

Verse 20. **If thine enemy hunger, feed him]** Do not withhold from any man the offices of mercy and kindness; *you* have been God's enemy, and yet God fed, clothed, and preserved you alive: do to your enemy as God has done to you. If your enemy be hungry, feed him; if he be thirsty, give him drink: so has God dealt with you. And has not a sense of his goodness and long-suffering towards you been a means of melting down your heart into penitential compunction, gratitude, and love towards him? How know you that a similar conduct towards *your* enemy may not have the same gracious influence on him towards you? Your kindness may be the means of begetting in him a sense of his guilt; and, from being your *fell enemy*, he may become your *real friend*! This I believe to be the sense of this passage, which many have encumbered with difficulties of their own creating. The whole is a quotation from **#Pr 25:21, 22**, in the precise words of the *Septuagint*; and it is very likely that the latter clause of this verse, *Thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head*, is a metaphor taken from *smelting metals*. The *ore* is put into the furnace, and fire put both *under* and *over*, that the metal may be liquefied, and, leaving the scoriæ and dross, may fall down pure to the bottom of the furnace. This is beautifully expressed by one of our own poets, in reference to this explanation of this passage:—

"So artists *melt* the *sullen* ore of *lead*,  
By *heaping coals of fire* upon its head.  
In the *kind warmth* the metal learns to *glow*,  
And *pure from dross* the silver *runs below*."

It is most evident, from the whole connection of the place and the apostle's use of it, that the *heaping of the coals of fire upon the head of the enemy* is intended to produce not an *evil*, but the most *beneficial effect*; and the following verse is an additional proof of this.

Verse 21. **Be not overcome of evil]** Do not, by giving place to evil, become precisely the same character which thou condemnest in another. *Overcome evil with good*—however frequently he may grieve and injure thee, always repay him with kindness; thy good-will, in the end, may overcome his evil.



1. THOMAS AQUINAS has properly said: *Vincitur a malo qui vult peccare in alium, quia ille peccavit in ipsum*. "He is overcome of evil who sins against another, because he sins against him." A moral enemy is more easily overcome by *kindness* than by *hostility*. Against the latter he arms himself; and all the evil passions of his heart concentrate themselves in opposition to him who is striving to retaliate, by violence, the injurious acts which he has received from him. But where the injured man is labouring to do him *good* for his *evil*-to repay his *curses* with *blessings* and *prayers*, his evil passions have no longer any motive, any incentive; his mind relaxes; the turbulence of his passions is calmed; reason and conscience are permitted to speak; he is disarmed, or, in other words, he finds that he has no use for his weapons; he beholds in the injured man a magnanimous friend whose mind is superior to all the insults and injuries which he has received, and who is determined never to permit the heavenly principle that influences his soul to bow itself before the miserable, mean, and wretched spirit of revenge. This amiable man views in his enemy a spirit which he beholds with horror, and he cannot consent to receive into his own bosom a disposition which he sees to be so destructive to another; and he knows that as soon as he begins to *avenge* himself, he places himself on a *par* with the unprincipled man whose *conduct* he has so much reason to blame, and whose *spirit* he has so much cause to abominate. He who avenges himself receives into his own heart all the evil and disgraceful passions by which his enemy is rendered both wretched and contemptible. There is the voice of *eternal reason* in "Avenge not yourselves:-overcome evil with good;" as well as the high authority and command of the living God.

2. The reader will, no doubt, have observed with pleasure the skill and address, as well as the Divine wisdom, with which the apostle has handled the important subjects which he has brought forth to view in the preceding chapters. Nothing can be more regular or judicious than his plan of proceeding. He *first* shows the *miserable, wretched, fallen, degraded state of man*; *next*, the *merciful provision* which God has made for his salvation, and *lastly*, the use which man should make of the mercies of his God. He shows us, in a most pointed manner, the *connection* that subsists between the *doctrines* of the Gospel and *practical piety*. From the beginning of the first to the end of the *eleventh* chapter he states and defends the grand truths of Christianity, and from the beginning of the *twelfth* to the end of the epistle he shows the practical use of these doctrines. This is a point which is rarely considered by professors; multitudes run to the Epistle to the Romans for texts to prop up their peculiar system of doctrine, but how few go to this sacred book for *rules* relative to *holy life*! They abound in quotations from the doctrinal parts, but seldom make that use of them which the apostle makes in this chapter. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, &c." Now we learn from the *use* which the apostle makes of his doctrines, that whatsoever teaching comes from God leads to a holy and useful life. And if we hold any doctrine that does not excite us to labour after the strictest conformity to the will of God in all our tempers, spirit, and actions, we may rest assured that either that doctrine is not of God, or we make an improper use of it. He that knows God best, loves and resembles him most.



## ROMANS

### CHAPTER XIII.

*Subjection to civil governors inculcated, from the consideration that civil government is according to the ordinance of God; and that those who resist the lawfully constituted authorities shall receive condemnation, 1, 2. And those who are obedient shall receive praise, 3. The character of a lawful civil governor, 4. The necessity of subjection, 5. The propriety of paying lawful tribute, 6, 7. Christians should love one another, 8-10. The necessity of immediate conversion to God proved from the shortness and uncertainty of time, 11, 12. How the Gentiles should walk so as to please God, and put on Christ Jesus in order to their salvation, 13, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP XIII.

To see with what propriety the apostle introduces the important subjects which he handles in this chapter, it is necessary to make a few remarks on the circumstances in which the Church of God then was.

It is generally allowed that this epistle was written about the year of our Lord 58, four or five years after the edict of the Emperor Claudius, by which all the Jews were banished from Rome. And as in those early times the Christians were generally confounded with the Jews, it is likely that both were included in this decree.

For what reason this edict was issued does not satisfactorily appear. *Suetonius* tells us that it was because the Jews were making continual disturbances under their leader *Christus*. (See **Clarke's note on "Ac 18:2"**.) That the Jews were in general an uneasy and seditious people is clear enough from every part of their own history. They had the most rooted aversion to the heathen government; and it was a maxim with them that the *world was given to the Israelites*; that they should have supreme rule every where, and that the Gentiles should be their vassals. With such political notions, grounded on their native restlessness, it is no wonder if in several instances they gave cause of suspicion to the Roman government, who would be glad of an opportunity to expel from the city persons whom they considered dangerous to its peace and security; nor is it unreasonable on this account to suppose, with Dr. Taylor, that the Christians, under a notion of being the *peculiar people of God*, and the subjects of his kingdom alone, might be in danger of being infected with those unruly and rebellious sentiments: therefore the apostle shows them that they were, notwithstanding their honours and privileges as Christians, bound by the strongest obligations of conscience to be subject to the civil government. The judicious commentator adds: "I cannot forbear observing the admirable skill and dexterity with which the apostle has handled the subject. His views in writing are always comprehensive on every point; and he takes into his thoughts and instructions all parties that might probably reap any benefit by them. As Christianity was then growing, and the powers of the world began to take notice of it, it was not unlikely that this letter might fall into the hands of the Roman magistrates. And whenever that happened it was right, not only that *they* should see that Christianity was no favourer of sedition, but likewise that they should have an opportunity of reading their own duty and obligations. But as they were too proud and insolent to permit themselves to be instructed in a plain, direct way, therefore the apostle with a masterly hand, delineates and strongly

inculcates the magistrate's duty; while he is pleading his cause with the subject, and establishing his duty on the most sure and solid ground, he dexterously sides with the magistrate, and vindicates his power against any subject who might have imbibed seditious principles, or might be inclined to give the government any disturbance; and under this advantage he reads the magistrate a fine and close lecture upon the nature and ends of civil government. A way of conveyance so ingenious and unexceptionable that even *Nero* himself, had this epistle fallen into his hands, could not fail of seeing his duty clearly stated, without finding any thing servile or flattering on the one hand, or offensive or disgusting on the other.

"The attentive reader will be pleased to see with what dexterity, truth, and gravity the apostle, in a small compass, affirms and explains the foundation, nature, ends, and just limits of the magistrate's authority, while he is pleading his cause, and teaching the subject the duty and obedience he owes to the civil government."-*Dr. Taylor's Notes*, page 352.

Verse 1. **Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.**] This is a very strong saying, and most solemnly introduced; and we must consider the apostle as speaking, not from his own private judgment, or teaching a doctrine of present *expediency*, but declaring the *mind of God* on a subject of the utmost importance to the peace of the world; a doctrine which does not exclusively belong to any *class* of people, *order* of the community, or *official* situations, but to *every soul*; and, on the principles which the apostle lays down, to every soul in all possible varieties of situation, and on all occasions. And what is this solemn doctrine? It is this: *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers*. Let every man be obedient to the civil government under which the providence of God has cast his lot.

**For there is no power but of God]** As God is the origin of power, and the supreme Governor of the universe, he delegates authority to whomsoever he will; and though in many cases the governor *himself* may not be *of God*, yet *civil government* is of him; for without this there could be no society, no security, no private property; all would be confusion and anarchy, and the habitable world would soon be depopulated. In ancient times, God, in an especial manner, on many occasions appointed the *individual* who was to govern; and he accordingly governed by a *Divine right*, as in the case of *Moses*, *Joshua*, the Hebrew *judges*, and several of the *Israelitish kings*. In after times, and to the present day, he does that by a general superintending providence which he did before by especial designation. In all nations of the earth there is what may be called a *constitution*-a plan by which a particular country or state is governed; and this constitution is less or more calculated to promote the interests of the community. The civil governor, whether he be *elective* or *hereditary*, agrees to govern according to that constitution. Thus we may consider that there is a *compact* and *consent* between the *governor* and the *governed*, and in such a case, the potentate may be considered as coming to the supreme authority in the direct way of God's providence; and as civil government is of God, who is the fountain of law, order, and regularity, the civil governor, who administers the laws of a state according to its *constitution*, is the *minister of God*. But it has been asked: If the ruler be an immoral or profligate man, does he not prove himself thereby to be unworthy of his high office, and should he not be deposed? I answer, No: if he rule according to the *constitution*, nothing can justify rebellion against his authority. He may be *irregular* in his *own private life*; he may be an immoral man, and disgrace himself by an improper conduct: but if he rule *according to the law*; if he make no attempt to change the constitution, nor break the compact between him and the people;

there is, therefore, no legal ground of opposition to his civil authority, and every act against him is not only *rebellion* in the worst sense of the word, but is unlawful and absolutely sinful.

Nothing can justify the opposition of the subjects to the ruler but *overt attempts* on his part to *change the constitution*, or to rule *contrary to law*. When the ruler acts thus he dissolves the compact between him and his people; his authority is no longer binding, because illegal; and it is illegal because he is acting *contrary to the laws* of that constitution, according to which, on being raised to the supreme power, he promised to govern. This conduct justifies opposition to his government; but I contend that no *personal misconduct* in the ruler, no immorality in his own life, while he *governs according to law*, can justify either rebellion against him or contempt of his authority. For his *political conduct* he is accountable to his *people*; for his *moral conduct* he is accountable to *God*, his *conscience*, and the *ministers of religion*. A king may be a *good moral man*, and yet a weak, and indeed a *bad and dangerous prince*. He may be a *bad man*, and stained with vice in his private life, and yet be a *good prince*. SAUL was a *good moral man*, but a *bad prince*, because he endeavoured to act contrary to the Israelitish constitution: he changed some essential parts of that constitution, as I have elsewhere shown; (see **Clarke's note on "Ac 13:22"**;) he was therefore lawfully deposed. *James the Second* was a *good moral man*, as far as I can learn, but he was a *bad and dangerous prince*; he endeavoured to alter, and essentially change the British constitution, both in *Church and state*, therefore *he* was lawfully deposed. It would be easy, in running over the list of our own kings, to point out several who were deservedly reputed *good kings*, who in their private life were very *immoral*. Bad as they might be in private life, the *constitution* was in their hands ever considered a sacred deposit, and they faithfully preserved it, and transmitted it unimpaired to their successors; and took care while they held the reins of government to have it impartially and effectually administered.

It must be allowed, notwithstanding, that when a prince, howsoever heedful to the laws, is unrighteous in private life, his example is contagious; morality, banished from the throne, is discountenanced by the community; and happiness is diminished in proportion to the increase of vice. On the other hand, when a king governs according to the constitution of his realms and has his heart and life governed by the laws of his God, he is then a double blessing to his people; while he is ruling carefully according to the laws, his pious example is a great means of extending and confirming the reign of pure morality among his subjects. Vice is discredited from the throne, and the profligate dare not hope for a place of trust and confidence, (however in other respects he may be qualified for it,) because he is a vicious man.

As I have already mentioned some potentates by *name*, as apt examples of the doctrines I have been laying down, my readers will naturally expect that, on so fair an opportunity, I should introduce *another*; one in whom the double blessing meets; one who, through an unusually protracted reign, during every year of which he most conscientiously watched over the sacred constitution committed to his care, not only did not impair this constitution, but took care that its wholesome laws should be properly administered, and who in every respect acted as the father of his people, and added to all this the most exemplary *moral conduct* perhaps ever exhibited by a prince, whether in ancient or modern times; not only tacitly discountenancing vice by his truly religious conduct, but by his frequent *proclamations* most solemnly forbidding Sabbath-breaking, profane swearing, and immorality in general. More might be justly said, but when I have mentioned all these things, (and

I mention them with exultation; and with gratitude to God,) I need scarcely add the venerable name of *GEORGE the Third, king of Great Britain*; as every reader will at once perceive that the description suits no potentate besides. I may just observe, that notwithstanding his long reign has been a reign of unparalleled troubles and commotions in the world, in which his empire has always been involved, yet, never did useful arts, ennobling sciences, and pure religion gain a more decided and general ascendancy: and much of this, under God, is owing to the manner in which this king has lived, and the encouragement he invariably gave to whatever had a tendency to promote the best interests of his people. Indeed it has been well observed, that, under the ruling providence of God, it was chiefly owing to the private and personal virtues of the sovereign that the house of Brunswick remained firmly seated on the throne amidst the storms arising from democratical agitations and revolutionary convulsions in Europe during the years 1792-1794. The stability of his throne amidst these dangers and distresses may prove a useful lesson to his successors, and show them the strength of a virtuous character, and that morality and religion form the best bulwark against those great evils to which all human governments are exposed. This small tribute of praise to the character and conduct of the British king, and gratitude to God for such a governor, will not be suspected of sinister motive; as the object of it is, by an inscrutable providence, placed in a situation to which neither *envy, flattery*, nor even just praise can approach, and where the majesty of the man is placed in the most awful yet respectable ruins. I have only one abatement to make: had this potentate been as *adverse from WAR* as he was from public and private vices, he would have been the most immaculate sovereign that ever held a sceptre or wore a crown.

But to resume the subject, and conclude the argument: I wish particularly to show the utter unlawfulness of rebellion against a ruler, who, though he may be incorrect in his moral conduct, yet rules according to the laws; and the additional blessing of having a prince, who, while his political conduct is regulated by the principles of the constitution, has his heart and life regulated by the dictates of eternal truth, as contained in that revelation which came from God.

Verse 2. **Whosoever resisteth the power]** ὁ ἀντιτασσόμενος, He who sets himself in *order* against this *order* of God; τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ, and *they who resist*, οἱ ἀνθεστηκότες, they who obstinately, and for no right reason, oppose the ruler, and strive to unsettle the constitution, and to bring about illegal changes,

**Shall receive to themselves damnation.]** κριμα, *condemnation*; shall be *condemned* both by the spirit and letter of that constitution, which, under pretence of defending or improving, they are indirectly labouring to subvert.

Verse 3. **For rulers are not a terror to good works]** Here the apostle shows the civil magistrate what he should be: he is clothed with great power, but that power is entrusted to him, not for the terror and oppression of the upright man, but to overawe and punish the wicked. It is, in a word, for the *benefit of the community*, and not for the *aggrandizement of himself*, that God has entrusted the supreme civil power to any man. If he should use this to wrong, rob, spoil, oppress, and persecute his subjects, he is not only a *bad man*, but also a *bad prince*. He infringes on the essential principles of law and equity. Should he *persecute* his obedient, loyal subjects, on any religious account, this is contrary to all law and right; and his doing so renders him unworthy of their confidence, and they must consider him not as a *blessing* but a *plague*. Yet, even in this case, though in our country it

would be a breach of the constitution, which allows every man to worship God according to his conscience, the truly pious will not feel that even this would justify rebellion against the prince; they are to suffer patiently, and commend themselves and their cause to him that judgeth righteously. It is an awful thing to rebel, and the cases are extremely rare that can justify rebellion against the constituted authorities. See the doctrine on **#Ro 13:1**.

**Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?]** If thou wouldst not live in fear of the civil magistrate, live according to the laws; and thou mayest expect that *he* will rule according to the laws, and consequently instead of incurring *blame* thou wilt have *praise*. This is said on the supposition that the ruler is himself a *good man*: such the laws suppose him to be; and the apostle, on the general question of obedience and protection, assumes the point that the magistrate *is* such.

Verse 4. **For he is the minister of God to thee for good]** Here the apostle puts the character of the ruler in the strongest possible light. *He is the minister of God*-the office is by Divine appointment: the man who is worthy of the office will act in conformity to the will of God: and as the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears open to their cry, consequently the ruler will be the *minister of God to them for good*.

**He beareth not the sword in vain]** His power is delegated to him for the defence and encouragement of the good, and the punishment of the wicked; and he has authority to punish *capitally*, when the law so requires: this the term *sword* leads us to infer.

**For he is the minister of God, a revenger]** θεου διακονος εστιν εκδικος, *For he is God's vindictive minister*, to execute *wrath*; εις οργην, to inflict *punishment* upon the transgressors of the law; and this according to the statutes of that law; for God's civil ministers are never allowed to pronounce or inflict punishment according to *their own minds* or *feeling*, but according to the express declarations of the law.

Verse 5. **Ye must needs be subject]** αναγκη, There is a necessity that ye should be subject, not only for wrath, δια την οργην, on *account of the punishment* which will be inflicted on evil doers, *but also for conscience' sake*; not only to avoid punishment, but also to preserve a clear conscience. For, as *civil government* is established in the order of God for the support, defence, and happiness of society, they who transgress its laws, not only expose themselves to the penalties assigned by the statutes, but also to guilt in their own consciences, because they sin against God. Here are *two* powerful motives to prevent the infraction of the laws and to enforce obedience. 1. The dread of punishment; this weighs with the ungodly. 2. The keeping of a good conscience, which weighs powerfully with every person who fears God. These two motives should be frequently urged both among professors and profane.

Verse 6. **For this cause pay ye tribute also]** Because civil government is an order of God, and the ministers of state must be at considerable expense in providing for the safety and defence of the community, it is necessary that those in whose behalf these expenses are incurred should defray that expense; and hence nothing can be more reasonable than an impartial and moderate *taxation*, by which the expenses of the state may be defrayed, and the various officers, whether civil or military, who are employed for the service of the public, be adequately remunerated. All this is just and right,

but there is no insinuation in the apostle's words in behalf of an *extravagant* and *oppressive taxation*, for the support of *unprincipled* and *unnecessary wars*; or the *pensioning of corrupt* or *useless men*. The taxes are to be paid for the support of those who are God's *ministers*-the necessary civil officers, from the king downwards, *who are attending CONTINUALLY on this very thing*. And let the reader observe, that by *God's ministers* are not meant here the ministers of *religion*, but the *civil officers* in all departments of the state.

Verse 7. **Render therefore to all their dues]** This is an extensive command. Be rigidly just; withhold neither from the *king* nor his *ministers*, nor his *officers of justice* and *revenue*, nor from even the lowest of the *community*, what the laws of God and your country require you to pay.

**Tribute to whom tribute]** φορον· This word probably means such taxes as were levied on *persons* and *estates*.

**Custom to whom custom]** τελος· This word probably means such duties as were laid upon *goods, merchandise, &c.*, on *imports* and *exports*; what we commonly call *custom*. Kypke on this place has quoted some good authorities for the above distinction and signification. Both the words occur in the following quotation from *Strabo*: αναγκη γαρ μειουσθαι τα τελη, φορων επιβαλλομενων· *It is necessary to lessen the CUSTOMS, if TAXES be imposed. Strabo, lib. ii., page 307.* See several other examples in *Kypke*.

**Fear to whom fear]** It is likely that the word φοβον, which we translate *fear*, signifies that reverence which produces *obedience*. Treat all *official* characters with respect, and be obedient to your superiors.

**Honour to whom honour.]** The word τιμην may here mean that *outward respect* which the principle *reverence*, from which it springs, will generally produce. Never behave rudely to any person; but behave respectfully to men in office: if you cannot even respect the *man*-for an important office may be filled by an unworthy person-respect the *office*, and the man on account of his *office*. If a man habituate himself to disrespect *official characters*, he will soon find himself disposed to pay little respect or obedience to the *laws themselves*.

Verse 8. **Owe no man any thing, but to love one another]** In the preceding verses the apostle has been showing the duty, reverence, and obedience, which all Christians, from the highest to the lowest, owe to the civil magistrate; whether he be emperor, king, proconsul, or other state officer; here he shows them their duty to *each other*: but this is widely different from that which they owe to the civil government: to the first they owe subjection, reverence, obedience, and tribute; to the latter they owe nothing but *mutual love*, and those offices which necessarily spring from it. Therefore, the apostle says, *Owe no man*; as if he had said: Ye owe to your fellow brethren nothing but mutual love, and this is what the law of God requires, and in this the law is fulfilled. Ye are not bound in obedience to them as to the civil magistrate; for to him *ye must needs be subject, not merely for fear of punishment, but for conscience sake*: but to these ye are bound by *love*; and by that love especially which utterly prevents you from doing any thing by which a brother may sustain any kind of injury.



Verse 9. **For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery]** He that loves another will not deprive him of his *wife*, of his *life*, of his *property*, of his *good name*; and will not even permit a *desire* to enter into his heart which would lead him to wish to possess any thing that is the property of another: for the *law*-the sacred Scripture, has said: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*.

It is remarkable that *οὐ ψευδομαρτυρησεις*, *thou shalt not bear false witness*, is wanting here in ABDEFG, and several other MSS. Griesbach has left it out of the text. It is wanting also in the Syriac, and in several of the primitive fathers. The generality of the best critics think it a spurious reading.

Verse 10. **Love worketh no ill]** As he that loves another will act towards that person as, on a reverse of circumstances, he would that his neighbour should act towards him; therefore, this love can never work ill towards another: and, on this *head*, i.e. the duty we owe to our neighbour, *love is the fulfilling of the law*.

Verse 11. **And that, knowing the time]** Dr. Taylor has given a judicious paraphrase of this and the following verses: "And all the duties of a virtuous and holy life we should the more carefully and zealously perform, considering the nature and shortness of the present season of life; which will convince us that it is now *high time* to rouse and shake off *sleep*, and apply with vigilance and vigour to the duties of our Christian life; for that eternal *salvation*, which is the object of our Christian *faith* and hope, and the great motive of our religion, is every day *nearer* to us than when we first entered into the profession of Christianity."

Some think the passage should be understood thus: We have now many advantages which we did not formerly possess. *Salvation is nearer*-the whole Christian system is more fully explained, and the knowledge of it more easy to be acquired than formerly; on which account a greater progress in religious knowledge and in practical piety is required of us: and we have for a long time been too remiss in these respects. *Deliverance* from the *persecutions*, &c., with which they were then afflicted, is supposed by others to be the meaning of the apostle.

Verse 12. **The night is far spent]** If we understand this in reference to the *heathen* state of the Romans, it may be paraphrased thus: *The night is far spent*-heathenish darkness is nearly at an end. *The day is at hand*-the full manifestation of the Sun of righteousness, in the illumination of the whole Gentile world approaches rapidly. The manifestation of the Messiah is regularly termed by the ancient Jews יוֹם, *yom*, *day*, because previously to this all is *night*, Bereshith rabba sect. 91, fol. 89. *Cast off the works of darkness*-prepare to meet this rising light, and welcome its approach, by throwing aside superstition, impiety, and vice of every kind: *and put on the armour of light*-fully receive the heavenly teaching, by which your spirits will be as completely *armed* against the attacks of evil as your bodies could be by the best weapons and impenetrable armour. This sense seems most suitable to the following verses, where the *vices of the Gentiles* are particularly specified; and they are exhorted to abandon them, and to receive the Gospel of Christ. The common method of explanation is this: *The night is far spent*-our present imperfect life, full of afflictions, temptations, and trials, is almost run out; *the day* of eternal blessedness *is at hand*-is about to dawn on us in our glorious resurrection unto eternal life. "Therefore, *let us cast off*-let us live as candidates for this



eternal glory. But this sense cannot at all comport with what is said below, as the *Gentiles* are most evidently intended.

Verse 13. **Let us walk honestly, as in the day]** *Let us walk*, ευσχημονες, *decently*, from εν, *well*, and σχημα, *mien, habit, or dress*. Let our deportment be decent, orderly, and grave; such as we shall not be ashamed of in the eyes of the whole world.

**Not in rioting, and drunkenness]** μη κωμοις και μεθαις· κωμος, *rioting*, according to *Hesychius*, signifies ασελγη ασματα, πορνικα συμποσια, ωδαι, *unclean and dissolute songs*, banquets, and such like. μεθαις signifies *drunken festivals*, such as were celebrated in honour of their gods, when *after* they had *sacrificed* (μετα το θυειν, *SUIDAS*) they drank to excess, accompanied with abominable acts of every kind. See *Suidas* and *Hesychius*, under this word.

**Not in chambering]** This is no legitimate word, and conveys no sense till, from its connection in this place, we force a meaning upon it. The original word, κοιταις, signifies *whoredoms* and *prostitution* of every kind.

**And wantonness]** ασελγειαις, All manner of *uncleanness* and *sodomitical* practices.

**Not in strife and envying.]** μη εριδι και ζηλω, Not in contentions and furious altercations, which must be the consequence of such practices as are mentioned above. Can any man suppose that this address is to the *Christians* at Rome? That they are charged with practices almost peculiar to the *heathens*? And practices of the most abandoned and dissolute sort? If those called *Christians* at Rome were guilty of such acts, there could be no difference except in *profession*, between them and the most *abominable* of the *heathens*. But it is impossible that such things should be spoken to the followers of Christ; for the very grace that brings *repentance* enables the penitent to cast aside and abominate all such vicious and abominable conduct.

The advices to the *Christians* may be found in the preceding chapter; those at the conclusion of this chapter belong *solely* to the *heathens*.

Verse 14. **Put ye on the Lord Jesus]** This is in reference to what is said, #Ro 13:13: *Let us put on decent garments*-let us make a different profession, unite with other company, and maintain that profession by a suitable conduct. *Putting on*, or *being clothed* with Jesus Christ, signifies *receiving* and *believing* the *Gospel*; and consequently taking its *maxims* for the government of life, having the mind that was in Christ. The ancient Jews frequently use the phrase putting on the shechinah, or Divine majesty, to signify the soul's being clothed with immortality, and rendered fit for glory.

*To be clothed with a person* is a Greek phrase, signifying to *assume the interests* of another-to *enter* into his views, to *imitate* him, and be *wholly* on *his side*. St. *Chrysostom* particularly mentions this as a common phrase, ο δεινα τον δεινα ενεδυσαστο, *such a one hath put on such a one*; i.e. he closely *follows* and *imitates* him. So *Dionysius Hal.*, *Antiq.*, lib. xi., page 689, speaking of *Appius* and the rest of the *Decemviri*, says: ουκετι μετριαζοντες, αλλα τον ταρκυνιον εκεινον ενδυομενοι, *They were no longer the servants of Tarquin, but they CLOTHED THEMSELVES WITH HIM*-they imitated and aped him in every thing. *Eusebius*, in his life of *Constantine*, says the same of his sons, *they put*

on their father—they seemed to enter into his spirit and views, and to imitate him in all things. The mode of speech itself is taken from the custom of *stage players*: they assumed the *name* and *garments* of the person whose *character* they were to act, and endeavoured as closely as possible to imitate him in their spirit, words, and actions. See many pertinent examples in *Kypke*.

**And make not provision for the flesh]** By *flesh* we are here to understand, not only the *body*, but all the irregular appetites and passions which led to the abominations already recited. No *provision* should be made for the encouragement and gratification of such a principle as this.

**To fulfil the lusts thereof.]** εἰς ἐπιθυμίας, in reference to its lusts; such as the κῶμοι, κοιταί, μέθαι, and ἀσελγείαι, rioting, drunkenness, prostitutions, and uncleanness, mentioned, #Ro 13:13, to make provision for which the Gentiles *lived* and *laboured*, and *bought* and *sold*, and *schemed* and *planned*; for it was the whole business of their life to gratify the *sinful lusts of the flesh*. Their philosophers taught them little else; and the whole circle of their deities, as well as the whole scheme of their religion, served only to excite and inflame such *passions*, and produce such *practices*.

I. IN these four last verses there is a fine metaphor, and it is continued and well sustained in every expression. 1. The apostle considers the state of the *Gentiles* under the notion of *night*, a time of darkness and a time of evil practices. 2. That this night is nearly at an *end*, the night is far spent. 3. He considers the Gospel as now visiting the Gentiles, and the *light* of a glorious *day* about to shine forth on them. 4. He calls those to *awake* who were in a *stupid, senseless* state concerning all spiritual and moral good; and those who were employed in the vilest practices that could debase and degrade mankind. 5. He orders them to *cast off the works of darkness*, and *put on the armour* ὅπλα, the *habiliments of light*—of righteousness: to cease to do evil; to learn to do well. Here is an allusion to laying aside their *night clothes*, and putting on their *day clothes*. 6. He exhorts them to this that they may *walk honestly, decently habited*; and not spend their time, waste their substance, destroy their lives, and ruin their souls in such iniquitous practices as those which he immediately specifies. 7. That they might not mistake his meaning concerning the *decent* clothing which he exhorts them to walk in, he immediately explains himself by the use of a common form of speech, and says, still following his *metaphor*, *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ*—receive his doctrine, copy his example, and seek the things which belong to another life; for the Gentiles thought of little else than making provision for the *flesh* or *body*, to gratify its animal desires and propensities.

II. These last verses have been rendered famous in the Christian Church for more than 1400 years, as being the instrument of the conversion of St. Augustine. It is well known that this man was at first a *Manichean*, in which doctrine he continued till the 32d year of his age. He had frequent conferences and controversies on the Christian religion with several friends who were Christians; and with his mother *Monica*, who was incessant in her prayers and tears for his conversion. She was greatly comforted by the assurance given her by St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, where her son Augustine was then professor of rhetoric: that *a child of so many prayers and fears could not perish*. He frequently heard St. Ambrose preach, and was affected, not only by his eloquence, but by the important subjects which he discussed; but still could not abandon his Manicheanism. Walking one day in a garden with his friend *Alypius*, who it appears had been reading a copy of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, and had left it on a bank near which they then were, (though some say that Augustine was then alone,) he thought he heard a musical voice calling out distinctly, TOLLE *et* LEGE! TOLLE

*et* LEGE! *take up and read! take up and read!* He looked down, saw the book, took it up, and hastily opening it, the first words that met his eye were these-μη κωμοις και μεθαις, &c., *Not in rioting and drunkenness, &c., but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* He felt the import and power of the words, and immediately resolved to become a follower of Christ: he in consequence instantly embraced Christianity; and afterwards boldly professed and wrote largely in its defence, and became one of the most eminent of all the *Latin* fathers. Such is the substance of the story handed down to us from antiquity concerning the conversion of St. Augustine. He was made bishop of Hippo in Africa, in the year 395, and died in that city, Aug. 28th, 430, at the very time that it was besieged by the Vandals.

III. After what I have said in the notes, I need add nothing on the great *political question* of *subordination* to the *civil powers*; and of the *propriety* and *expediency* of *submitting* to every *ordinance of man for the Lords sake*. I need only observe, that it is in things *civil* this obedience is enjoined; in things *religious*, God alone is to be obeyed. Should the civil power attempt to usurp the place of the Almighty, and forge a new creed, or prescribe rites and ceremonies not authorized by the word of God, no Christian is bound to obey. Yet even in this case, as I have already noted, no Christian is authorized to rebel against the civil power; he must bear the persecution, and, if needs be, seal the truth with his blood, and thus become a *martyr* of the Lord Jesus. This has been the invariable practice of the genuine Church of Christ. They committed their cause to him who judgeth righteously. See farther on this subject on #Mt 22:20, &c.

## ROMANS

### CHAPTER XIV.

*In things indifferent, Christians should not condemn each other, 1. Particularly with respect to different kinds of food, 2-4. And the observation of certain days, 5, 6. None of us should live unto himself, but unto Christ, who lived and died for us, 7-9. We must not judge each other; for all judgment belongs to God, 10-13. We should not do any thing by which a weak brother may be stumbled or grieved; lest we destroy him for whom Christ died, 14-16. The kingdom of God does not consist in outward things, 17, 18. Christians should endeavour to cultivate peace and brotherly affection, and rather deny themselves of certain privileges than be the means of stumbling a weak brother, 19-21. The necessity of doing all in the spirit of faith, 22, 23.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XIV.

It seems very likely, from this and the following chapter, that there were considerable misunderstandings between the *Jewish* and *Gentile* Christians at Rome, relative to certain customs which were sacredly observed by the one and disregarded by the other. The principal subject of dispute was concerning *meats* and *days*. The converted Jew, retaining a veneration for the law of Moses, abstained from certain meats, and was observant of certain days; while the converted Gentile, understanding that the Christian religion laid him under no obligations to such ceremonial points, had no regard to either. It appears, farther, that mutual censures and uncharitable judgments prevailed among them, and that brotherly love and mutual forbearance did not generally prevail. The apostle, in this part of his epistle, exhorts that in such things, not essential to religion, and in which both parties, in their different way of thinking, might have an *honest meaning*, and *serious regard to God*, difference of sentiments might not hinder Christian fellowship and love; but that they would mutually forbear each other, make candid allowance, and especially not carry their Gospel liberty so far as to prejudice a weak brother, a Jewish Christian, against the Gospel itself, and tempt him to renounce Christianity. His rules and exhortations are still of great use, and happy would the Christian world be if they were more generally practised. See Dr. Taylor, who farther remarks, that it is probable St. Paul learned all these particulars from Aquila and Priscilla, who were lately come from Rome, **#Ac 18:2, 3**, and with whom the apostle was familiar for a considerable time. This is very likely, as there is no evidence that he had any other intercourse with the Church at Rome.

Verse 1. **Him that is weak in the faith]** By this the apostle most evidently means the converted Jew, who must indeed be weak in the faith, if he considered this distinction of meats and days essential to his salvation. **See Clarke on "Ro 14:21".**

**Receive ye]** Associate with him; receive him into your religious fellowship; but when there, let all religious altercations be avoided.

**Not to doubtful disputations.]** μη εις διακρίσεις δια λογισμων. These words have been variously translated and understood. Dr. *Whitby* thinks the sense of them to be this; *Not discriminating them by their inward thoughts*. Do not reject any from your Christian communion because of their particular sentiments on things which are in themselves *indifferent*. Do not

curiously inquire into their religious scruples, nor condemn them on that account. Entertain a brother of this kind rather with what may profit his soul, than with curious disquisitions on speculative points of doctrine. A good lesson for modern Christians in general.

Verse 2. **One believeth that he may eat all things]** He believes that whatsoever is *wholesome* and *nourishing*, whether *herbs* or *flesh*-whether enjoined or forbidden by the Mosaic law-may be safely and conscientiously used by every Christian.

**Another, who is weak, eateth herbs.]** Certain Jews, lately converted to the Christian faith, and having as yet little knowledge of its doctrines, believe the Mosaic law relative to clean and unclean meats to be still in force; and therefore, when they are in a Gentile country, for fear of being defiled, avoid flesh entirely and live on vegetables. And a Jew when in a heathen country acts thus, because he cannot tell whether the flesh which is sold in the market may be of a *clean* or *unclean* beast; whether it may not have been *offered* to an *idol*; or whether the *blood* may have been taken properly from it.

Verse 3. **Let not him that eateth]** The *Gentile*, who eats flesh, *despise him*, the *Jew*, who *eateth* not flesh, but *herbs*. And let not him, the Jew, *that eateth* not indiscriminately, *judge-condemn him*, the Gentile, *that eateth* indiscriminately flesh or vegetables.

**For God hath received him.]** Both being *sincere* and upright, and acting in the fear of God, are *received* as *heirs* of *eternal life*, without any difference on account of these religious scruples or prejudices.

Verse 4. **Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?]** Who has ever given thee the right to condemn the servant of another man, in things pertaining to his own master? *To his own master he standeth or falleth*. He is to judge him, not thou; thy intermeddling in this business is both rash and uncharitable.

**Yea, he shall be holden up]** He is sincere and upright, and *God, who is able to make him stand*, will uphold him; and so teach him that he shall not essentially err. And it is the will of God that such upright though scrupulous persons should be continued members of his Church.

Verse 5. **One man esteemeth one day above another]** Perhaps the word *ἡμέραν*, *day*, is here taken for *time*, *festival*, and such like, in which sense it is frequently used. Reference is made here to the *Jewish institutions*, and especially their *festivals*; such as the *passover*, *pentecost*, *feast of tabernacles*, *new moons*, *jubilee*, &c. The converted *Jew* still thought these of moral obligation; the *Gentile* Christian not having been bred up in this way had no such prejudices. And as those who were the instruments of bringing him to the knowledge of God gave him no such injunctions, consequently he paid to these no religious regard.

**Another]** The converted *Gentile* *esteemeth every day*-considers that all *time* is the Lord's, and that each day should be devoted to the glory of God; and that those festivals are not binding on him.

We add here *alike*, and make the text say what I am sure was never intended, viz. that there is no distinction of days, not even of the Sabbath: and that every Christian is at liberty to consider even this day to be holy or not holy, as he happens to be persuaded in his own mind.

That the *Sabbath* is of lasting obligation may be reasonably concluded from its *institution* (see **Clarke's note on "Ge 2:3"**) and from its *typical* reference. All allow that the Sabbath is a type of that *rest in glory* which *remains for the people of God*. Now, all types are intended to continue in full force till the antitype, or thing signified, take place; consequently, the Sabbath will continue in force till the consummation of all things. The word *alike* should not be added; nor is it acknowledged by any MS. or ancient *version*.

**Let every man be fully persuaded]** With respect to the propriety or non-propriety of keeping the above *festivals*, let every man act from the plenary conviction of his own mind; there is a sufficient latitude allowed: all may be fully satisfied.

Verse 6. **He that regardeth the day]** A beautiful apology for *mistaken sincerity* and *injudicious reformation*. Do not condemn the man for what is indifferent in itself: if he keep these *festivals*, his purpose is to honour God by the religious observance of them. On the other hand, he who finds that he cannot observe them in honour of God, not believing that God has enjoined them, he does not observe them at all. In like manner, he that eateth any creature of God, which is wholesome and proper food, *gives thanks to God* as the author of all good. And he who cannot eat of all indiscriminately, but is regulated by the precepts in the Mosaic law relative to *clean* and *unclean meats*, also *gives God thanks*. Both are sincere; both upright; both act according to their light; God accepts both; and *they* should bear with each other.

Verse 7. **None of us liveth to himself]** The Greek writers use the phrase, *εαυτω ζην*, to signify acting according to one's own judgment, following one's own opinion. Christians must act in all *things* according to the mind and will of God, and not follow their own *wills*. The apostle seems to intimate that in all the above cases each must endeavour to *please God*, for he is accountable to him alone for his conduct in these indifferent things. God is our master, we must *live to him*, as we live under his notice and by his bounty; and when we cease to live among men, we are still in his hand. Therefore, what we do, or what we leave undone, should be in reference to that eternity which is ever at hand.

Verse 9. **Christ both died and rose]** That we are not our own, but are the Lord's both in life and death, is evident from this—that Christ lived, and died, and rose again, *that he might be the Lord of the dead and the living*; for his power extends equally over both worlds: *separate*, as well as *embodied spirits*, are under his authority; and he it is who is to raise even the dead to life: and thus all throughout eternity shall live under his dominion.

The clause *και ανεστη*, and *rose*, is wanting in several reputable MSS., and certainly is not necessary to the text. Griesbach omits the words, and reads *απεθανε και εζησεν*, *died and lived*; of which Professor *White* says, *lectio indubie genuina*: "this reading is indisputably genuine."



Verse 10. **But why dost thou]** *Christian Jew*, observing the rites of the Mosaic law, judge-condemn *thy brother*-the *Christian Gentile*, who does not think himself bound by this law?

**Or why dost thou]** *Christian Gentile*, set at nought thy *Christian Jewish brother*, as if he were unworthy of thy regard, because he does not yet believe that the Gospel has set him free from the rites and ceremonies of the law?

It is a true saying of Mr. Heylin, on this verse: *The superstitious are prone to judge, and those who are not superstitious are prone to despise.*

**We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.]** Why should we then judge and condemn each other? We are accountable to God for our conduct, and shall be judged at his bar; and let us consider that whatever measure we mete, the same shall be measured unto us again.

Verse 12. **Every one of us shall give account of himself]** We shall not, at the bar of God, be obliged to account for the conduct of *each other*-each shall give account of himself: and let him take heed that he be prepared to give up his accounts with joy.

Verse 13. **Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more]** Let us abandon such rash conduct; it is dangerous, it is uncharitable: judgment belongs to the Lord, and he will *condemn* those only who should *not be acquitted*.

**That no man put a stumbling block]** Let both the converted *Jew* and *Gentile* consider that they should labour to promote each other's spiritual interests, and not be a means of hindering each other in their *Christian course*; or of causing them to abandon the Gospel, on *which*, and not on questions of *rites* and *ceremonies*, the salvation of their soul depends.

Verse 14. **I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus]** After reasoning so long and so much with these contending parties on the subject of their mutual misunderstandings, without attempting to give any opinion, but merely to show them the folly and uncharitableness of their conduct, he now expresses himself fully, and tells them that *nothing is unclean of itself*, and that he has the inspiration and authority of Jesus Christ to say so; for to such an inspiration he must refer in such words as, *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus*. And yet, after having given them this decisive judgment, through respect to the tender, mistaken conscience of weak believers, he immediately adds: *But to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean*; because if he act contrary to his conscience, he must necessarily contract guilt; for he who acts in opposition to his conscience in one case may do it in another, and thus even the *plain declarations* of the *word of God* may be set aside on things of the utmost importance, as well as the *erroneous* though well-intentioned dictates of his conscience, on matters which he makes of the *last consequence*; though others who are better taught know them to be *indifferent*.

It is dangerous to *trifle with conscience*, even when *erroneous*; it should be borne with and instructed; it must be *won over*, not *taken by storm*. Its feelings should be respected because they ever refer to God, and have their foundation in his fear. He who sins against his conscience in things which every one else knows to be indifferent, will soon do it in those things in which his salvation



is most intimately concerned. It is a great blessing to have a *well-informed* conscience; it is a blessing to have a *tender* conscience; and even a *sore* conscience is infinitely better than none.

Verse 15. **If thy brother be grieved]** If he think that thou doest wrong, and he is in consequence stumbled at thy conduct.

**Now walkest thou not charitably.]** *κατα αγαπην*, According to love; for love worketh no ill to its neighbour; but by thy eating some particular kind of meat, on which neither thy *life* nor *well-being* depends, thou *workest ill* to him by *grieving* and distressing his mind; and therefore thou breakest the *law of God* in reference to him, while pretending that *thy Christian liberty* raises thee above his *scruples*.

**Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.]** This puts the uncharitable conduct of the person in question in the strongest light, because it supposes that the weak brother may be so *stumbled* as to *fall* and *perish finally*; even the man *for whom Christ died*. To injure a man in his *circumstances* is bad; to injure him in his *person* is worse; to injure him in his *reputation* is still worse; and to injure his *soul* is worst of all. No wickedness, no malice, can go farther than to injure and destroy the soul: thy uncharitable conduct may proceed thus far; therefore thou art highly criminal before God.

From this verse we learn that a *man for whom Christ died* may *perish*, or have his soul *destroyed*; and destroyed with such a *destruction* as implies *perdition*; the original is very emphatic, *μη-εκεινον απολλυε, υπερ ου χριστος απεθανε*. Christ died in his *stead*; do not destroy his soul. The *sacrificial death* is as strongly expressed as it can be, and there is no word in the New Testament that more forcibly implies *eternal ruin* than the verb *απολλυω*, from which is derived that most significant name of the *Devil*, *ο Απολλυων*, the DESTROYER, the great universal murderer of souls.

Verse 16. **Let not then your good be evil spoken of]** Do not make such a use of your *Christian liberty* as to subject the *Gospel* itself to reproach. Whatsoever you do, do it in such a manner, spirit, and time, as to make it productive of the greatest possible good. There are many who have such an unhappy method of doing their good acts, as not only to do *little* or *no good* by them, but a great deal of *evil*. It requires much prudence and watchfulness to find out the proper time of performing even a good action.

Verse 17. **For the kingdom of God]** That holy religion which God has sent from heaven, and which he intends to make the instrument of establishing a counterpart of the kingdom of glory among men: see Clarke on "Mt 3:2".

**Is not meat and drink]** It consists not in these outward and indifferent things. It neither particularly *enjoins* nor particularly *forbids* such.

**But righteousness]** Pardon of sin, and holiness of heart and life.

**And peace]** In the soul, from a sense of God's mercy; peace regulating, ruling, and harmonizing the heart.

**And joy in the Holy Ghost.]** Solid spiritual *happiness*; a joy which springs from a clear sense of God's mercy; the love of God being shed abroad in the heart by the *Holy Ghost*. In a word, it is happiness brought into the soul by the Holy Spirit, and maintained there by the same influence. This is a genuine counterpart of heaven; *righteousness* without sin, PEACE without inward *disturbance*, JOY without any kind of *mental agony* or distressing *fear*. **See Clarke's note on "Mt 3:2"**.

Verse 18. **For he that in these things]** The man, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, who in *these things*-righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, *serveth Christ*-acts according to his doctrine, is *acceptable to God*; for he has not only the *form* of godliness in thus *serving Christ*, but he has the *power*, the very *spirit* and *essence* of it, in having righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and therefore the whole *frame* of his *mind*, as well as his *acts*, must be acceptable to God.-*And approved of men*; for although religion may be persecuted, yet the righteous man, who is continually labouring for the public good, will be generally esteemed. This was a very common form of speech among the Jews; that *he who was a conscientious observer of the law, was pleasing to God and approved of men*. See several examples in *Schoettgen*.

Verse 19. **Let us therefore follow]** Far from contending about *meats, drinks, and festival times*, in which it is not likely that the *Jews* and *Gentiles* will *soon* agree, let us endeavour to the utmost of our power to promote *peace* and *unity*, that we may be instrumental in edifying each other, in promoting religious knowledge and piety instead of being *stumbling-blocks* in each other's way.

Verse 20. **For meat destroy not the work of God]** Do not hinder the *progress of the Gospel* either in your own souls or in those of others, by contending about lawful or unlawful meats. And do not destroy the soul of thy Christian brother, **#Ro 14:15**, by offending him so as to induce him to *apostatize*.

**All things indeed are pure]** This is a repetition of the sentiment delivered, **#Ro 14:14**, in different words. Nothing that is *proper* for *aliment* is *unlawful* to be eaten; *but* it is *evil for that man who eateth with offence*-the man who either eats contrary to his own conscience, or so as to grieve and stumble another, does an *evil* act; and however *lawful* the thing may be in *itself*, his conduct does not please God.

Verse 21. It is **good neither to eat flesh, &c.]** The spirit and self-denying principles of the Gospel teach us, that we should not only avoid every thing in eating or drinking which may be an occasion of offence or apostasy to our brethren, but even to lay down our lives for them should it be necessary.

**Whereby thy brother stumbleth]** *πρόσκοπτει*, from *πρός*, against, and *κόπτω*, to *strike*, to *hit the foot* against a *stone* in walking, so as to *halt*, and be *impeded* in one's *journey*. It here means, spiritually, any thing by which a man is so perplexed in his mind as to be prevented from making due *progress* in the Divine life. Any thing by which he is caused to *halt*, to be *undecisive*, and undetermined; and under such an influence no man has ever yet *grown* in *grace* and in the *knowledge of Jesus Christ*.

**Or is offended]** η σκανδαλιζεται, from σκανδαλον, a *stumbling-block*; any thing by which a person is caused to *fall*, especially into a *snare*, *trap*, or *gin*. Originally the word signified the *piece of wood* or *key* in a *trap*, which being trodden on caused the animal to fall into a pit, or the trap to close upon him. In the New Testament it generally refers to *total apostasy* from the Christian religion; and this appears to be its meaning in this place.

**Or is made weak.]** η ασθενει, from α, *negative*, and σθενος, *strength*; without *mental vigour*; without *power* sufficiently to distinguish between *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *evil*, *lawful* and *unlawful*. To get under the dominion of an *erroneous* conscience, so as to judge that to be *evil* or *unlawful* which is *not so*. The two last terms are omitted by two excellent MSS. (the *Codex Alexandrinus* and the *Codex Ephraim*,) by the *Syriac* of Erpen, the *Coptic* and the *Ethiopic*, and by some of the *primitive* fathers. It is very likely that they were *added* by some early hand by way of illustration. *Griesbach* has left them in the text with a note of *doubtfulness*.

Verse 22. **Hast thou faith?**] The term *faith* seems to signify in this place a *full persuasion in a man's mind that he is right*, that what he does is *lawful*, and has the *approbation of God* and his *conscience*. Dr. Taylor has a judicious note on this passage. "There is no necessity," says he, "for reading the first clause *interrogatively*; and it seems to be more agreeable to the structure of the Greek to render it, *Thou hast faith*; as if he had said: 'I own thou hast a right persuasion.' Farther, there is an *anadiplosis* in εχεις, and εχε the first simply signifies *thou hast*, the latter, *hold fast*. Thou hast a right persuasion concerning thy Christian liberty; and I advise thee to hold that persuasion steadfastly, with respect to thyself in the sight of God. εχω *have*, has frequently this emphatical signification. See #Mt 25:29, &c."

**Happy is he that condemneth not, &c.]** That man only can enjoy *peace of conscience* who acts according to the full persuasion which God has given him of the lawfulness of his conduct: whereas he must be miserable who allows himself in the practice of any thing for which his conscience upbraids and accuses him. This is a most excellent maxim, and every genuine Christian should be careful to try every part of his conduct by it. If a man have not peace in his own bosom, he cannot be happy; and no man can have peace who sins against his conscience. If a man's passions or appetite allow or instigate him to a particular thing, let him take good heed that his conscience *approve* what his passions *allow*, and that he live not the subject of continual self-condemnation and reproach. Even the man who has the too scrupulous conscience had better, in such matters as are in question, obey its *erroneous* dictates than violate this moral feeling, and live only to condemn the actions he is constantly performing.

Verse 23. **And he that doubteth]** This verse is a necessary part of the preceding, and should be read thus: *But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat*, because he eateth *not of faith*. The meaning is sufficiently plain. He that feeds on any kind of meats prohibited by the Mosaic law, with the persuasion in his mind that he may be wrong in so doing, is condemned by his conscience for doing that which he has reason to think God has forbidden.

**For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.]** Whatever he does, without a *full persuasion* of its lawfulness, (see #Ro 14:22) is to him *sin*; for he does it under a conviction that he may be wrong in so doing. Therefore, if he makes a distinction in his own conscience between different kinds of

meats, and yet eats of all indifferently, he is a *sinner* before God; because he eats either through *false shame*, *base compliance*, or an *unbridled appetite*; and *any* of these is in itself a *sin* against the sincerity, ingenuousness, and self-denying principles of the Gospel of Christ.

Some think that these words have a more extensive signification, and that they apply to all who have not *true religion*, and *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; every work of such persons being sinful in the sight of a holy God, because it does not proceed from a pure motive. On this ground our Church says, *Art. xiii*, "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they are not of faith in Jesus Christ; yes, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." To this we may add, that without faith it is impossible to please God; every thing is wrong where this principle is wanting.

There are few readers who have not remarked that the last three verses of this epistle (**#Ro 16:25-27**) appear to stand in their present place without any *obvious connection*; and apparently *after* the epistle is concluded. And it is well known to critics, that two MSS. in *uncial* letters, the Cod. A and I, with upwards of 100 others, together with the *Slavonic*, the later *Syriac* and *Arabic*, add those verses at the end of the fourteenth chapter. The transposition is acknowledged by *Cyril*, *Chrysostom*, *Theodoret*, *Æcumenius*, *Theophylact*, *Theodulus*, *Damascenus*, and *Tertullian*; see *Wetstein*. *Griesbach* inserts them at the end of this chapter as their proper place; and most learned men approve of this transposition. It may be necessary to repeat the words here that the reader may see with what propriety they connect with the subject which terminates the fourteenth chapter as it now stands.

**#Ro 14:23:** *And he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

**#Ro 16:25:** *Now, to him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began,*

**#Ro 16:26:** *But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith;)*

**#Ro 16:27:** *To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*

**#Ro 15:1:** *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, &c.*

These words certainly connect better with the close of the fourteenth chapter and the beginning of the fifteenth than they do with the conclusion of the sixteenth, where they are now generally found; but I shall defer my observations upon them till I come to that place, with only this remark, that the *stablishing* mentioned **#Ro 16:25**, corresponds well with the *doubting*, **#Ro 14:23**, and indeed the whole matter of these verses agrees so well with the subject so largely handled in the preceding chapter, that there can be very little doubt of their being in their proper place if joined to the end of this chapter, as they are in the preceding MSS. and versions.

## ROMANS

### CHAPTER XV.

*The strong should bear the infirmities of the weak, and each strive to please, not himself, but his neighbour, after the example of Christ, 1-3. Whatsoever was written in old times was written for our learning, 4. We should be of one mind, that we might with one mouth glorify God, 5, 6. We should accept each other as Christ has accepted us, 7. Scriptural proofs that Jesus Christ was not only the minister of the circumcision, but came also for the salvation of the Gentiles, 8-12. The God of hope can fill us with all peace and joy in believing, 13. Character of the Church of Rome, 14. The reason why the apostle wrote so boldly to the Church in that city-what God had wrought by him, and what he purposed to do, 15-24. He tells them of his intended journey to Jerusalem, with a contribution to the poor saints-a sketch of this journey, 25-29. He commends himself to their prayers, 30-33.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XV.

Verse 1. **We then that are strong]** The sense of this verse is supposed to be the following: We, Gentile Christians, who perfectly understand the nature of our Gospel liberty, not only lawfully may, but are bound in duty to bear any inconveniences that may arise from the scruples of the weaker brethren, and to ease their consciences by prudently abstaining from such indifferent things as may offend and trouble them; and not take advantage from our superior knowledge to make them submit to our judgment.

Verse 2. **Let every one of us please his neighbour]** For it should be a maxim with each of us to do all in our power to please our brethren; and especially in those things in which their spiritual edification is concerned. Though we should not indulge men in mere whims and caprices, yet we should bear with their ignorance and their weakness, knowing that others had much to bear with from us before we came to our present advanced state of religious knowledge.

Verse 3. **For even Christ pleased not himself]** Christ never acted as one who sought his *own ease or profit*; he not only bore with the weakness, but with the insults, of his creatures; as it is written in **#Ps 69:9**: *The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me*-I not only bore their insults, but bore the punishment due to them for their vicious and abominable conduct. That this Psalm refers to the Messiah and his sufferings for mankind is evident, not only from the quotation here, but also from **#Joh 19:28, 29**, when our Lord's receiving the vinegar during his expiatory suffering is said to be a fulfilling of the scripture, viz. of verse 21 of this very Psalm; **{#Ps 69:21}** and his cleansing the temple, **#Joh 2:15-17**, is said to be a fulfilment of **#Ps 69:9**: *For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up*, the former part of which verse the apostle quotes here.

Verse 4. **For whatsoever things were written aforetime]** This refers not only to the quotation from the 69th Psalm, but to all the *Old Testament* scriptures; for it can be to no other scriptures that the apostle alludes. And, from what he says here of them, we learn that God had not intended them merely for those generations in which they were first delivered, but for the instruction of all the succeeding generations of mankind. *That we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures-that*

we, through those remarkable examples of *patience* exhibited by the saints and followers of God, whose history is given in those scriptures, and the *comfort* which they derived from God in their patient endurance of sufferings brought upon them through their faithful attachment to truth and righteousness, *might have hope* that we shall be upheld and blessed as they were, and our sufferings become the means of our greater advances in faith and holiness, and consequently our *hope of eternal glory* be the more confirmed. Some think that the word παρακλησις, which we translate *comfort*, should be rendered *exhortation*; but there is certainly no need here to leave the *usual* acceptance of the term, as the word *comfort* makes a regular and consistent sense with the rest of the verse.

Verse 5. **Now the God of patience and consolation]** May that God who endued them with *patience*, and gave them the *consolation* that supported them in all their trials and afflictions, *grant you to be like-minded*-give you the same mode of thinking, and the same power of acting towards each other, *according* to the example of *Christ*.

Verse 6. **That ye-Jews and Gentiles-may with one mind]** Thinking the same things, and bearing with each other, after the example of Christ; and *one mouth*, in all your religious assemblies, without jarring or contentions, *glorify God* for calling you into such a state of salvation, and showing himself to be *your* loving compassionate *Father*, as he is *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

It is very likely that the apostle refers here to *religious acts in public worship*, which might have been greatly interrupted by the dissensions between the converted Jews and the converted Gentiles; these differences he labours to compose; and, after having done all that was necessary in the way of instruction and exhortation, he now pours out his soul to God, who alone could rule and manage the heart, that he would enable them to think the same things, to be of the same judgment, and that all, feeling their obligation to him, might join in the sweetest harmony in every act of religious worship.

Verse 7. **Wherefore receive ye one another]** προσλαβανεσθε· Have the most *affectionate regard* for each other, and acknowledge each other as the servants and children of God Almighty.

**As Christ also received us]** καθως και ο χριστος προσελαβετο ημας· In the same manner, and with the same *cordial affection*, as *Christ has received* us into communion with himself, and has made us partakers of such inestimable blessings, condescending to be present in all our assemblies. And as Christ has *received us* thus to the glory of God, so should we, Jews and Gentiles, cordially *receive each other*, that God's glory may be promoted by our *harmony* and brotherly love.

Verse 8. **Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision]** To show the Gentiles the propriety of bearing with the scrupulous Jews, he shows them here that they were under the greatest obligations to this people; to whom, in the days of his flesh, Jesus Christ confined his ministry; giving the world to see that he allowed the claim of the Jews as having the *first* right to the blessings of the Gospel. And he confined his ministry thus to the Jews, to *confirm the truth of God*, contained in the promises made unto the *patriarchs*; for God had declared that thus it should be; and Jesus Christ, by coming according to the promise, has fulfilled this truth, by making good the promises: therefore, salvation is of the Jews, as a kind of *right* conveyed to them through the *promises* made



to their *fathers*. But this salvation was not exclusively designed for the Jewish people; as God by his prophets had repeatedly declared.

Verse 9. **And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy]** As the Jews were to glorify God for his *truth*, so the Gentiles were to glorify God for his *mercy*. The Jews received the blessings of the Gospel by *right of promise*, which promise God had most punctually and circumstantially *fulfilled*. The Gentiles had received the same Gospel as an effect of God's mere *mercy*, having no *right* in consequence of any promise or engagement made with any of their ancestors, though they were originally included in the covenant made with Abraham; and the *prophets* had repeatedly declared that they should be made *equal* partakers of those blessings with the Jews themselves; as the apostle proceeds to prove.

**I will confess to thee among the Gentiles]** This quotation is taken from **#Ps 18:49**, and shows that the Gentiles had a right to glorify God for his mercy to them; and we shall see the strength of this saying farther, when we consider a maxim of the Jews delivered in *Megillah*, fol. 14: "From the time that the children of Israel entered into the promised land, no Gentile had any right to *sing a hymn of praise to God*. But after that the Israelites were led into captivity, then the Gentiles *began to have a right to glorify God*." Thus the Jews themselves confess that the Gentiles have a *right to glorify God*; and this on account of being made partakers of his grace and mercy. And if, says *Schoettgen*, we have a *right* to glorify God, then it follows that our worship must be *pleasing* to him; and if it be *pleasing* to him, then it follows that this worship must be *good*, otherwise God could not be pleased with it.

Dr. Taylor gives a good paraphrase of this and the three following verses: As you Jews glorify God for his *truth*, so the Gentiles have a right to join with you in glorifying God for his *mercy*. And you have Scripture authority for admitting them to such fellowship; for instance, *David* says, **#Ps 18:49**, *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and sing praises unto thy name*. And again, *Moses* himself says, **#De 32:43**, *Rejoice, O ye Gentiles, with his people*. And again, it is evident, from **#Ps 117:1, 2**, that praise to God is not to be confined to the *Jews* only, but that *all* people, as they *all* share in his goodness, should also join in thanks to their common benefactor: *O praise the Lord, all ye nations, (Gentiles,) praise him all ye people; for his merciful kindness is great towards us; and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever*. Again the Prophet *Isaiah* expressly and clearly declares, **#Isa 11:10**, *There shall be a root of Jesse, (that is, the Messiah,) and he shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, and in him shall the Gentiles hope: ἐλπιουσιν*. And thus the apostle proves, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles, who were probably unwilling to join with each other in religious fellowship, that they had both an equal right to glorify God, being equally interested in his mercy, goodness, and truth; and that, from the evidence of the above *scriptures*, the *Gentiles* had as much right to *hope in Christ*, for the full enjoyment of his kingdom, as the *Jews* had: and, taking occasion from the last word *hope*, ἐλπιουσιν, which we improperly translate *trust*, he pours out his heart in the following affectionate prayer.

Verse 13. **Now the God of hope, &c.]** ὁ δε θεος της ελπιδος, *May the God of this hope*-that God who caused both Jews and Gentiles to hope that the gracious promises which he made to them should be fulfilled; and who, accordingly, has fulfilled them in the most punctual and circumstantial manner;



**Fill you with all joy]** Give you true spiritual *happiness; peace* in your own hearts, and *unity* among yourselves; *in believing* not only the promises which he has given you, but believing in Christ Jesus, in whom all the promises are *yea* and *amen*.

**That ye may abound in hope]** That ye may be excited to take more enlarged views of the salvation which God has provided for you, and have all your *expectations* fulfilled *by the power of the Holy Ghost*, enabling you to *hope* and *believe*; and then sealing the fulfilment of the promises upon your hearts.

Verse 14. **And I-am persuaded of you]** This is supposed to be an address to the Gentiles; and it is managed with great delicacy: he seems to apologize for the *freedom* he had used in writing to them; which he gives them to understand proceeded from the authority he had received by his apostolical office, the exercise of which office respected *them* particularly. So they could not be offended when they found themselves so particularly distinguished.

**Ye-are full of goodness]** Instead of *αγαθωσυνης*, *goodness*, some MSS. of good repute have *αγαπης*, *love*. In this connection both words seem to mean nearly the same thing. They were so full of *goodness* and *love* that they were disposed, of themselves, to follow any plan that might be devised, in order to bring about the most perfect understanding between them and their Jewish brethren.

**Filled with all knowledge]** So completely instructed in the mind and design of God, relative to their *calling*, and the *fruit* which they were to bring forth to the glory of God, that they were well qualified to give *one another* suitable exhortations on every important point.

Instead of *αλληλους*, *one another*, several MSS. have *αλλους*, *others*, which gives a clearer sense: for, if they were *all* filled with knowledge, there was little occasion for them to admonish *one another*; but by this they were well qualified to admonish *others*-to impart the wisdom they had to those who were less instructed.

Verse 15. **Nevertheless-I have written]** Not withstanding I have this conviction of your extensive knowledge in the things of God, I have made bold to write to you *in some sort*, *απο μερους*, *to a party* among you, as some learned men translate the words, who stand more in need of such instructions than the others; and I do this, *because of the grace*, *δια την χαριν*-because of the *office* which I have received from God, namely, to be the *apostle* of the Gentiles. This authority gave him full right to say, advise, or enjoin any thing which he judged to be of importance to their spiritual interests. This subject he pursues farther in the following verse.

Verse 16. **Ministering the Gospel of God]** *‘ιερουργουντα*, *Acting as a priest*. Here is a plain allusion, says Dr. Whitby, to the Jewish sacrifices offered by the priest, and *sanctified* or made acceptable by the *libamen* offered with them; for he compares himself, in preaching the Gospel, to the *priest performing his sacred functions*-preparing his sacrifice to be offered. The *Gentiles*, converted by him and dedicated to the service of God, are his sacrifices and oblation. The *Holy Spirit* is the *libamen* poured upon this sacrifice, by which it was sanctified and rendered *acceptable*

to God. The words of *Isaiah*, #**Isa 66:20**, *And they shall bring all your brethren for an OFFERING unto the Lord, out of all NATIONS*, might have suggested the above idea to the mind of the apostle.

Verse 17. **I here therefore whereof I may glory**] Being sent of God on this most honourable and important errand, I have matter of great exultation, not only in the *honour* which he has conferred upon me, but in the great *success* with which he has crowned my ministry.

Verse 18. **For I will not dare to speak**] If the thing were not as I have stated it, I would not dare to arrogate to myself honours which did not belong to me. But God has made me the apostle of the Gentiles; and the conversion of the Gentiles is the fruit of my ministry, Christ having *wrought by me* for this purpose.

**By word and deed**] *λογω και εργω*. These words may refer to the *doctrines* which he taught and to the *miracles* which he wrought among them. So they became obedient to the *doctrines*, on the evidence of the *miracles* with which they were accompanied.

Verse 19. **Through mighty signs and wonders**] This more fully explains the preceding clause: through the power of the Holy Ghost he was enabled to work among the Gentiles *mighty signs and wonders*; so that they were fully convinced that both his doctrine and mission were Divine; and therefore they cheerfully received the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.

**Round about unto Illyricum**] Among ancient writers this place has gone by a great variety of names, *Illyria*, *Illyrica*, *Illyricum*, *Illyris*, and *Illyrium*. It is a country of Europe, extending from the Adriatic gulf to Pannonia: according to Pliny, it extended from the river *Arsia* to the river *Drinius*, thus including Liburnia on the *west*, and Dalmatia on the *east*. Its precise limits have not been determined by either ancient or modern geographers. It seems, according to an inscription in *Gruter*, to have been divided by Augustus into *two* provinces, the *upper* and *lower*. It now forms part of Croatia, Bosnia, Istria, and Slavonia. When the apostle says that he preached the Gospel from Jerusalem *round about to Illyricum*, he intends his *land* journeys chiefly; and, by looking at the map annexed to the Acts of the Apostles, the reader will see that from Jerusalem the apostle went *round* the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and that he passed through *Syria*, *Phaenicia*, *Arabia*, *Cilicia*, *Pamphylia*, *Pisidia*, *Lycaonia*, *Galatia*, *Pontus*, *Paphlagonia*, *Phrygia*, *Troas*, *Asia*, *Caria*, *Lycia*, *Ionia*, *Lydia*, *Thrace*, *Macedonia*, *Thessaly*, and *Achaia*; besides the isles of *Cyprus* and *Crete*. And no doubt he visited many other places which are not mentioned in the New Testament.

**I have fully preached the Gospel**] *πεπληρωκεναι το ευαγγελιον*, *I have successfully preached-I* have not only *proclaimed* the word, but made *converts* and founded Churches. **See Clarke's note on "Mt 5:17"**, where this sense of the word *πληρουν* is noticed; for it signifies not only *fully* or *perfectly*, but also to *teach* with *prosperity* and *success*.

Verse 20. **So have I strived to preach the Gospel**] *ουτω δε φιλοτιμουμενον*. For I have considered it my *honour* to preach the Gospel where that Gospel was before unknown. This is the proper import of the word *φιλοτιμεισθαι*; from *φιλος*, a *friend*, and *τιμη*, *honour*. As I am *not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*, so I esteem it an *honour* to preach it, and especially to proclaim it among the *heathen*; *not building on another man's foundation*-not watering what another apostle

had planted; but cheerfully exposing myself to all kinds of dangers and hardships, in order to found new Churches.

Verse 21. **But as it is written]** These words, quoted from **#Isa 52:15**, the apostle applies to his own conduct; not that the words themselves predicted what Paul had done, but that he endeavoured to fulfil such a declaration by his manner of preaching the Gospel to the heathen.

Verse 22. **For which cause, &c.]** My considering it *a point of honour to build on no other man's foundation*; and, finding that the Gospel has been long ago planted at Rome, I have been prevented from going thither, purposing rather to spend my time and strength in preaching where Christ has not, as yet, been proclaimed.

Verse 23. **But-having no more place in these parts]** Having nothing farther at present that I can do-for **τοπον εχειν** signifies not merely to *have a place of residence*, or the like, but *convenience, opportunity*; which is a frequent meaning of the phrase among the best Greek writers-having no large place or city, where Christianity has not yet been planted, in which I can introduce the Gospel. The apostle was then at *Corinth*; and having evangelized all those parts, he had no opportunity of breaking up any new ground.

Verse 24. **Whensoever I take my journey into Spain]** Where it is very likely the Gospel had not yet been planted; though *legendary tales* inform us that St. James had planted the Gospel there long before this time, and had founded many *bishoprics*! But this is as unfounded as it is ridiculous and absurd; for nothing like what is now termed a *bishopric*, nor even a *parish*, was founded for many years after this. An *itinerant preacher*, might, with more propriety, say *travelling circuits* were formed, rather than *bishoprics*. Whether the apostle ever fulfilled his design of going to Spain is unknown; but there is no evidence whatever that he did, and the presumption is that he did not undertake this voyage. Antiquity affords no proof that he fulfilled his intention.

**I will come to you]** **ελευσομαι προς υμας**. These words are wanting in almost every MS. of note, and in the *Syriac of Erpen*, *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, *Ethiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Itala*. If the first clause of this verse be read in connection with the latter clause of the preceding, it will fully appear that this rejected clause is useless. *Having a great desire, these many years to come unto you whensoever I take my journey into Spain: for I trust to see you in my journey, &c.*

**Somewhat filled with your company.]** The word **εμπλησθω**, which we translate *filled*, would be better rendered *gratified*; for **εμπλησθηναι** signifies to be *satisfied*, to *be gratified*, and to *enjoy*. *ÆLIAN.*, *Hist. Anim.*, lib. v., c. 21, speaking of the *peacock* spreading out his beautiful plumage, says: **εα γαρ εμπλησθηναι της θεος του παρεστωτα**. "He readily permits the spectator to *gratify himself* by viewing him." And *MAXIMUS TYRIUS*, *Dissert.* 41, page 413: "That he may behold the heavens, **και εμπλησθη λαμπρου φωτος**, and be *gratified* with the splendour of the light." *HOMER* uses the word in the same sense:—

Ἡ δ' ἐμῇ οὐδὲ περ υἱὸς ἐνιπλησθῆναι ἀκοίτις

Ὀφθαλμοῖσιν εἶσε.

Odyss., lib. xi., ver. 451.

"But my wife never suffered my eyes to be delighted with my son."

The apostle, though he had not the honour of having planted the Church at Rome, yet expected much *gratification* from the visit which he intended to pay them.

Verse 25. **Now I go unto Jerusalem]** From this and the two following verses we learn that the object of his journey to Jerusalem was, to carry a contribution made among the Gentile Christians of Macedonia and Achaia for the relief of the poor Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. About this affair he had taken great pains, as appears from **#1Co 16:1-4**; 2 Cor. 8, and 9. His design in this affair is very evident from **#2Co 9:12, 13**, where he says: *The administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; whiles, by the experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them and unto all men.* The apostle was in hopes that this liberal contribution, sent by the *Gentile* Christians who had been converted by St. Paul's ministry, would engage the affections of the Jewish Christians, who had been much prejudiced against the reception of the Gentiles into the Church, without being previously obliged to submit to the *yoke of the law*. He wished to establish a coalition between the converted Jews and Gentiles, being sensible of its great importance to the spread of the Gospel; and his procuring this contribution was one laudable device to accomplish this good end. And this shows why he so earnestly requests the prayers of the Christians at Rome, that his service which he had for Jerusalem might be accepted of the saints. See *Dr. Taylor*.

Verse 27. **For if the Gentiles have been made partakers, &c.]** It was through and by means of the Jews that the Gentiles were brought to the knowledge of God and the Gospel of Christ. These were the *spiritual things* which they had received; and the pecuniary contribution was the *carnal things* which the Gentiles were now returning.

Verse 28. **When, therefore, I have performed this]** Service, *and have sealed*-faithfully delivered up, *to them this fruit*, of the success of my ministry and of your conversion to God, *I will come by you into Spain*: this was in his desire; he had fully purposed it, if God should see meet to permit him; but it does not appear that he ever went. See **#Ro 15:24**.

Verse 29. **In the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.]** The words **του ευαγγελιου του**, *of the Gospel*, are wanting in almost every MS. of importance. *Griesbach* has left them out of the text. There is no doubt they should be *omitted*. *The fulness of the blessing of Christ* is really *more than the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ*. He hoped to come to them not only with the *blessing of the Gospel*, but endued with the *gifts and graces* of the Lord Jesus himself; which he was now a constant instrument, in the hand of God, to dispense among those who were converted to the Christian faith.

Verse 30. **For the love of the Spirit]** By that love of God which the *Holy Spirit* sheds abroad in your hearts.

**That ye strive together]** συναγωνισασθαι *That ye agonize with me.* He felt that much depended on the *success* of his present mission to the Christians at Jerusalem, and their acceptance of the charitable contribution which he was bringing with him, in order to conciliate them to the reception of the Gentiles into the Church of God without obliging them to submit to circumcision.

Verse 31. **That I may be delivered from them that do not believe]** He knew that his countrymen, who had not received the Gospel, lay in wait for his life; and, no doubt, they thought they should do God service by destroying him, not only as an apostate, in their apprehension, from the Jewish religion, but as one who was labouring to subvert and entirely destroy it.

**And that my service]** διακονια. But several eminent MSS. read δωροφορια, *the gift which I bear.* This probably was a *gloss*, which in many MSS. subverted the word in the text; for διακονια, *service*, in its connection here, could refer to nothing else but the *contribution* which he was carrying to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

Verse 32. **That I may come unto you with joy]** That his apprehensions of ill usage were not groundless, and the danger to which his life was exposed, real, we have already seen in the account given of this visit, Acts 21, 22, 23, and 24; and that he had such intimations from the Holy Spirit himself appears from #Ac 20:23; 21:11; 20:38. Should his journey to Jerusalem be prosperous, and his service accepted, so that the converted Jews and Gentiles should come to a better understanding, he hoped to see them at Rome with *great joy*: and if he got his wishes gratified *through their prayers*, it would be the full proof that this whole business had been conducted according to *the will of God*.

Verse 33. **The God of peace be with you]** The whole object of the epistle is to establish peace between the believing Jews and Gentiles, and to show them their mutual obligations, and the infinite mercy of God to both; and now he concludes with praying that the God of peace-he from whom it comes, and by whom it is preserved-may be for ever with them. The word *Amen*, at the end, does not appear to have been written by the apostle: it is wanting in some of the most ancient MSS.

1. IN the preceding chapters the apostle enjoins a very hard, but a very important and necessary, duty-that of bearing with each other, and endeavouring to think and let think, in those religious matters which are confessedly not *essential* to the salvation of the soul. Most of the disputes among Christians have been concerning non-essential points. *Rites* and *ceremonies*, even in the *simple* religion of Christ, have contributed their part in promoting those animosities by which Christians have been divided. *Forms* in worship and *sacerdotal garments* have not been without their influence in this general disturbance. Each side has been ready to take out of the 14th and 15th chapters of this epistle such *expressions* as seemed suitable to their own case; but few have been found who have taken up the *whole*. You believe that a person who holds such and such opinions is *wrong*: pity him and set him right, *lovingly*, if possible. He believes you to be wrong because you *do not* hold those points; he must bear with *you*. Both of you stand precisely on the same ground, and are mutually indebted to mutual forbearance.

2. Beware of contentions in religion, if you dispute concerning any of its doctrines, let it be to find out *truth*; not to support a preconceived and pre-established opinion. Avoid all polemical heat and rancour; these prove the absence of the religion of Christ. Whatever does not lead you to love God and man more, is most assuredly from beneath. The *God of peace* is the author of Christianity; and the *Prince of peace*, the priest and sacrifice of it: therefore love one another, and leave off contention before it be meddled with. On this subject the advice of the pious Mr. Herbert is good:—

Be *calm* in arguing; for *fierceness* makes  
Error a *fault*, and truth discourtesy.  
Why should I *feel* another man's *mistakes*  
More than his *sickness* or his *poverty*?  
In *love* I should; but *anger* is not *love*;  
Nor *wisdom* neither:—therefore *g-e-n-t-l-y m-o-v-e*.



## ROMANS

### CHAPTER XVI.

*The apostle commends to the Christians at Rome Phœbe, a deaconess of the Church at Cenchrea, 1, 2. Sends greetings to Aquila and Priscilla, of whom he gives a high character; and greets also the Church at their house, 3-5. Mentions several others by name, both men and women, who were members of the Church of Christ at Rome, 6-16. Warns them to beware of those who cause dissensions and divisions, of whom he gives an awful character, 17, 18. Extols the obedience of the Roman Christians, and promises them a complete victory over Satan, 19, 20. Several persons send their salutations, 21-23. To whose good wishes he subjoins the apostolic blessing; commends them to God; gives own abstract of the doctrines of the Gospel: and concludes with ascribing glory to the only wise God, through Christ Jesus, 24-27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XVI.

Verse 1. **I commend unto you Phœbe]** As the apostle had not been at Rome previously to his writing this epistle, he could not have had a personal acquaintance with those members of the Church there to whom he sends these friendly salutations. It is likely that many of them were his own converts, who, in different parts of Asia Minor and Greece, had heard him preach the Gospel, and afterwards became settlers at Rome.

Phœbe is here termed a *servant*, *διακονον*, a deaconess of the Church at Cenchrea. There were deaconesses in the primitive Church, whose business it was to attend the female converts at baptism; to instruct the catechumens, or persons who were candidates for baptism; to visit the sick, and those who were in prison, and, in short, perform those religious offices for the *female* part of the Church which could not with propriety be performed by *men*. They were chosen in general out of the most experienced of the Church, and were ordinarily *widows*, who had borne *children*. Some ancient constitutions required them to be forty, others fifty, and others sixty years of age. It is evident that they were *ordained* to their office by the *imposition of the hands of the bishop*; and the *form of prayer* used on the occasion is extant in the apostolical constitutions. In the tenth or eleventh century the order became extinct in the *Latin Church*, but continued in the *Greek Church* till the end of the twelfth century. See *Broughton's Dictionary*, article *deaconess*.

*Cenchrea* was a sea-port on the *east* side of the isthmus which joined the Morea to Greece, as the *Lechæum* was the sea-port on the *west* side of the same isthmus. These were the only two havens and towns of any note, next to *Corinth*, that belonged to this territory. As the *Lechæum* opened the road to the *Ionian* sea, so *Cenchrea* opened the road to the *Ægean*; and both were so advantageously situated for commerce that they were very rich. These two places are now usually denominated the *Gulf of Lepanto*, and the *Gulf of Ingia* or *Egina*. It was on the isthmus, between these two *ports*, which was about six miles wide, that the Isthmian games were celebrated; to which St. Paul makes such frequent allusions.



Verse 2. **Succourer of many]** One who probably entertained the apostles and preachers who came to minister at *Cenchrea*, and who was remarkable for entertaining strangers. See Clarke on "**Ro 12:8**".

Verse 3. **Greet Priscilla and Aquila]** This pious couple had been obliged to leave Rome, on the edict of Claudius, see **#Ac 18:2**, and take refuge in Greece. It is likely that they returned to Rome at the death of Claudius, or whenever the decree was annulled. It seems they had greatly contributed to assist the apostle in his important labours. Instead of *Priscilla*, the principal MSS. and versions have *Prisca*, which most critics suppose to be the genuine reading.

Verse 4. **Who have for my life laid down their own necks]** What transaction this refers to we know not; but it appears that these persons had, on some occasion, hazarded their own lives to save that of the apostle; and that the fact was known to all the Churches of God in that quarter, who felt themselves under the highest obligations to these pious persons, for the important service which they had thus rendered.

Verse 5. **The Church that is in their house.]** In these primitive times no such *places* existed as those which we now term *churches*; the word always signifying the *congregation* or *assembly* of believers, and not the *place* they assembled in. See the term defined at the end of the notes, **#Mt 16:28**.

**Epenetus-the first fruits of Achaia]** In **#1Co 16:15**, the *house* or family of *Stephanas* is said to be the first fruits of Achaia: how then can it be said here, that *Epenetus* was the first fruits, or first person who had received the Gospel in that district? *Ans.*-Epenetus might have been one of the family of Stephanas; for it is not said that *Stephanas* was the first fruits, but his *house* or *family*; and there can be no impropriety in supposing that one of that house or family was called *Epenetus*; and that this person, being the only one of the family now at Rome, might be mentioned as the *first fruits* of Achaia; that is, *one* of that *family* which *first* received the Gospel in that country. This would rationally account for the apparent difficulty, were we sure that *αχαίας*, of *Achaia*, was the true reading; but this is more than doubtful, for *ασίας*, of *Asia*, is the reading of ABCDEFG, some others; the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and *Itala*; and some of the chief of the *fathers*. On this evidence *Griesbach* has admitted it into the text. Yet the other reading is sufficiently natural, for the reasons already assigned.

Verse 6. **Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.]** Who this *Mary* was, or what the *labour* was which she bestowed upon the apostles, we know not. Her works, though hidden from man, are with God; and her name is recorded with honour in this book of life.

Verse 7. **Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen]** As the word *συγγενεῖς* signifies *relatives*, whether *male* or *female*, and as *Junia* may probably be the name of a *woman*, the wife of Andronicus, it would be better to say *relatives* than *kinsmen*. But probably St. Paul means no more than that they were *Jews*; for, in **#Ro 9:3**, he calls all the Jews *his kinsmen according to the flesh*.

**My fellow prisoners]** As Paul was in prison often, it is likely that these persons shared this honour with him on some occasion, which is not distinctly marked.

**Of note among the apostles]** Whether this intimates that they were *noted apostles* or only highly reputed *by the apostles*, is not absolutely clear; but the latter appears to me the most probable. They were not only well known to St. Paul, but also to the rest of the apostles.

**In Christ before me.]** That is, they were converted to Christianity before Paul was; probably at the day of pentecost, or by the ministry of Christ himself, or by that of the seventy disciples.

Verse 8. **Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.]** One who is my *particular friend*, and also a genuine Christian.

Verse 9. **Urbane, our helper]** Who this Urbanus was we know not; what is here stated is, that he had been a fellow labourer with the apostles.

**Stachys, my beloved.]** One of my *particular friends*.

Verse 10. **Apelles, approved in Christ]** A man who, on different occasions, had given the highest proofs of the sincerity and depth of his religion. Some suppose that *Apelles* was the same with *Apollos*: whoever he was, he had given every demonstration of being a genuine Christian.

**Of Aristobulus' household.]** It is doubted whether this person was converted, as the apostle does not *salute* him, but his *household*; or as the margin reads, *his friends*. He might have been a Roman of considerable distinction, who, though not converted himself, had Christians among his *servants* or his *slaves*. But, whatever he was, it is likely that he was *dead* at this time, and therefore those of his household only are referred to by the apostle.

Verse 11. **Herodion, my kinsman.]** Probably another converted *Jew*. See Clarke on "Ro 16:7".

**Of the household of Narcissus]** Probably *dead* also, as we have supposed *Aristobulus* to have been at this time.

**Which are in the Lord.]** This might intimate that some of this family were not Christians; those only of that family that were converted to the Lord being saluted. There was a person of the name of *Narcissus*, who was a freed man of the Emperor Claudius, mentioned by *Suetonius* in his life of that prince, cap. 37; and by *Tacitus*, An., lib. xii. cap. 57: but there does not seem any reason to suppose that this was the person designed by St. Paul.

Verse 12. **Tryphena and Tryphosa]** Two holy women, who it seems were assistants to the apostle in his work, probably by *exhorting, visiting the sick, &c.* *Persis* was another woman, who it seems excelled the preceding; for, of her it is said, she *laboured much in the Lord*. We learn from this, that Christian *women*, as well as *men*, laboured in the ministry of the word. In those times of simplicity all persons, whether men or women, who had received the knowledge of the truth, believed it to be their duty to propagate it to the uttermost of their power. Many have spent much useless labour in endeavouring to prove that these women did not *preach*. That there were some *prophetesses*, as well as *prophets* in the Christian Church, we learn; and that a *woman* might *pray*

or *prophesy*, provided she had her *head covered*, we know; and that whoever *prophesied* spoke unto others to *edification, exhortation, and comfort*, St. Paul declares, **#1Co 14:3**. And that no preacher can do *more*, every person must acknowledge; because to *edify, exhort, and comfort*, are the prime ends of the Gospel ministry. If *women* thus *prophesied*, then *women preached*. There is, however, much more than this implied in the Christian ministry, of which men only, and men called of God, are capable.

Verse 13. **Rufus, chosen in the Lord**] *τον εκλεκτον*, one of *great excellence* in Christianity; a *choice* man, as we would say. So the word *εκλεκτος* often signifies. **#Ps 78:31**: *They smote τους εκλεκτους*, the *chosen men that were of Israel*. So *εκλεκτα μνημεια* are *choice sepulchres*, **#Ge 23:6**: *εκλεκτα των δωρων* *choice gifts*, **#De 12:11**; and *ανδρες εκλεκτοι*, *choice men*, **#Jud 20:16**. By the same use of the word, the companions of Paul and Barnabas are termed *chosen men*, *εκλεξαμενους ανδρας*, persons in whom the Church of God could confide. See *Whitby*.

**His mother and mine.**] It is not likely that the mother of Rufus was the mother of Paul; but while she was the natural mother of the former, she acted *as a mother* to the latter. We say of a person of this character, that she is a *motherly* woman. Among the ancients, he or she who acted a kind, instructing, and indulgent part to another, was styled the *father* or *mother* of such a one. So *Terence*:—

*Natura tu illi pater es, consiliis ego.  
Adelphi, Act. i. scen. 2, ver. 47.*

Thou art his father by nature, I by instruction.

Verse 14. **Salute Asyncritus, &c.**] Who these were we know not. Hermas was probably the same to whom a work called the *Shepherd* is attributed; a work with this title is still extant, and may be found among the writings of the *apostolical* fathers. But it is in vain to look for *identity of persons* in *similarity of names*; for, among the Greeks and Romans at this time there were many persons who bore the same names mentioned in this chapter.

Verse 15. **Salute Philologus, &c.**] Of these several persons, though much has been conjectured, nothing certain is known. Even the names of some are so ambiguous that we know not whether they were *men* or *women*. They were persons well known to St. Paul, and undoubtedly were such as had gone from different places where the apostle had preached to sojourn or settle at Rome. One thing we may remark, that there is no mention of St. *Peter*, who, according to the Roman and papistical catalogue of bishops, must have been at Rome at this time; if he were not now at Rome, the foundation stone of Rome's ascendancy, of Peter's supremacy, and of the uninterrupted succession, is taken away, and the whole fabric falls to the ground. But if Peter were at Rome at this time, Paul would have sent his salutations to *him* in the *first* place; and if Peter were there, he must have been there, according to the papistical doctrine, as *bishop* and *vicar of Jesus Christ*; but if he were there, is it likely that he should have been passed by, while *Andronicus* and *Junia* are mentioned as of *note among the apostles*, **#Ro 16:7**, and that St. Paul should call on the *people* to remedy the *disorders* that had crept in among themselves; should not these directions have been given to *Peter*, the *head of the Church*? And if there were a Church, in the papistical sense of the word, founded there, of

which Peter was the *head*, is it likely that that Church should be in *the house of Priscilla and Aquila*, **#Ro 16:5**. But it is a loss of time to refute such ridiculous and groundless pretensions. It is very likely that Peter, so far from being universal bishop at Rome, never saw the city in his life.

Verse 16. **Salute one another with a holy kiss.**] In those early times the *kiss*, as a token of *peace, friendship, and brotherly love*, was frequent among all people; and the Christians used it in their public assemblies, as well as in their occasional meetings. This was at last laid aside, not because it was abused, but because, the Church becoming very numerous, the thing was impossible. In some countries the kiss of friendship is still common; and in such countries it is scarcely ever abused, nor is it an incentive to evil, because it is *customary* and *common*. Shaking of hands is now substituted for it in almost all Christian congregations.

**The Churches of Christ salute you.**] The word πασαι, ALL, is added here by some of the most reputable MSS. and principal versions; and *Griesbach* has received it into his text. St. Paul must mean, here, that all the Churches in Greece and Asia, through which he had passed, in which the faith of the Christians at Rome was known, spoke of them affectionately and honourably; and probably knowing the apostle's design of visiting Rome, desired to be kindly remembered to the Church in that city.

Verse 17. **Mark them which cause divisions**] Several MSS. read ασφαλως σκοπειτε, *look sharply after them*; let *them* have no kiss of charity nor peace, because they strive to make *divisions*, and thus set the flock of Christ at variance among themselves; and from these *divisions, offences* (σκανδαλα, *scandals*) are produced; and this is contrary to that doctrine of *peace, unity, and brotherly love which you have learned*. *Look sharply* after such that they do you no evil, *and avoid them*-give them no countenance, and have no religious fellowship with them.

Verse 18. **They-serve not our Lord Jesus**] They profess to be apostles, but they are not apostles of CHRIST; they neither *do* his will, nor *preach* his doctrine; *they serve their own belly*-they hate intruded themselves into the Church of Christ that they might get a secular support; it is for *worldly* gain alone that they take up the profession of the ministry: they have no Divine credentials; they convert not the *heathen* nor the *ungodly*, for they have no Divine unction; *but by good words and fair speeches* (for they have no *miraculous* nor *saving* powers) *deceive the hearts of the simple, perverting Christian converts*, that they may get their property, and thus secure a maintenance for themselves. The Church of God has ever been troubled with such pretended *pastors*-men who FEED *themselves*, not the *flock*; men who are too proud to beg, and too lazy to work; who have neither grace nor gifts to plant the standard of the cross on the devil's territories, and by the power of Christ make inroads upon his kingdom, and spoil him of his subjects. On the contrary, by sowing the seeds of *dissension*, by means of *doubtful disputations*, and the propagation of *scandals*; by glaring and insinuating speeches, χρηστολογιας, for they affect *elegance* and *good breeding*, they rend Christian congregations, form a party for themselves, and thus live on the spoils of the Church of God.

Should it be asked, Whom do you intend by this description? I answer: No *soul*, nor *party*, but *such as the description suits*. *Irasceris.?-De TE fabula narratur*. O, you are angry, are you? O, then, the cap fits you-put it on.

Verse 19. **For your obedience is come abroad]** The apostle gives this as a reason why they should continue to hear and heed those who had led them into the path of truth, and avoid those false teachers whose doctrines tended to the subversion of their souls.

**Yet I would have you wise]** I would wish you carefully to *discern* the good from the evil, and to show your *wisdom*, by carefully avoiding the one and cleaving to the other.

Verse 20. **The God of peace]** Who neither sends nor favours such disturbers of the tranquillity of his Church.

**Shall bruise Satan]** Shall give you the dominion over the great *adversary* of your souls, and over all his *agents* who, through his influence, endeavour to destroy your peace and subvert your minds.

Several critics suppose that the word *Satan* is a sort of collective term here, by which all *opposers* and *adversaries* are meant; and especially those false teachers to whom he refers above.

**The grace of our Lord]** That you may be truly wise simple, obedient, and steady in the truth, may the favour or gracious influence of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you! without which you cannot be preserved from evil, nor do any thing that is good.

Here the apostle appears to have intended to conclude his epistle; but afterwards he added a *postscript*, if not *two*, as we shall see below. Several ancient MSS. omit the whole of this clause, probably thinking that it had been borrowed from **#Ro 16:24**; but on the ground that the apostle might have added a postscript or two, not having immediate opportunity to send the epistle there is no need for this supposition.

Verse 21. **Timotheus my workfellow]** This is on all hands allowed to be the same *Timothy* to whom St. Paul directs the two epistles which are still extant. See some account of him in the notes on **#Ac 16:1**, &c.

**Lucius]** This was probably Luke the *evangelist*, and writer of the book called *The Acts of the Apostles*. For a short account of him see the *Preface* to that book.

**Jason]** It is likely that this is the same person mentioned **#Ac 17:7**, who at Thessalonica received the apostles into his house, and befriended them at the risk both of his property and life.

**Sosipater]** He was a Berean, the son of one *Pyrrhus*, a Jew, by birth, and accompanied St. Paul from Greece into Asia, and probably into Judea. See **#Ac 20:4**.

Verse 22. **I Tertius, who wrote this epistle]** Some eminent commentators suppose *Tertius* to be the same with *Silas*-the companion of St. Paul. If this were so, it is strange that the *name* which is generally given him elsewhere in Scripture should not be used in this place. I have already noticed (*Preface*, page v.) that some learned men have supposed that St. Paul wrote this epistle in *Syriac*, and that Tertius translated it into Greek; but this can never agree with the declaration here: I Tertius, who wrote, *γραψας την επιστολην*, this epistle; not *translated* or *interpreted* it. It appears that St.

Paul dictated it to him, and he wrote it down from the apostle's mouth; and here introduces himself as joining with St. Paul in affectionate wishes for their welfare.

**Salute you in the Lord.]** I wish you well in the name of the Lord: or, I feel for you that affectionate respect which the grace of the Lord Jesus inspires. It is not clear whether the two following verses be the words of *Tertius* or St. Paul.

Verse 23. **Gaius mine host]** *Gaius* in Greek is the same as *Caius* in Latin, which was a very common name among the Romans. St. Luke (**#Ac 19:29**) mentions one *Gaius of Macedonia*, who was exposed to much violence at Ephesus in the tumult excited by Demetrius the silversmith against St. Paul and his companions; and it is very possible that this was the same person. He is here called not only the *host* ξενος, the *entertainer* of St. Paul, or *Tertius*, (if he wrote this and the following verse,) but also of the *whole Church*: that is, he received and lodged the apostles who came from different places, as well as the messengers of the Churches. All made his house their home; and he must have been a person of considerable property to be able to bear this expense; and of much piety and love to the cause of Christ, else he had not employed that property in this way.

**Erastus the chamberlain of the city]** *Treasurer of the city* of Corinth, from which St. Paul wrote this epistle. This is supposed to be the same person as is mentioned **#Ac 19:22**. He was one of St. Paul's companions, and, as appears from **#2Ti 4:20**, was left about this time by the apostle at Corinth. He is called the *chamberlain* οικονομος, which signifies the same as *treasurer*; he to whom the *receipt* and *expenditure* of the public money were intrusted. He received the tolls, customs, &c., belonging to the city, and out of them paid the public expenses. Such persons were in very high credit; and if Erastus was at *this time* treasurer, it would appear that Christianity was then in considerable repute in Corinth. But if the Erastus of the Acts was the same with the Erastus mentioned here, it is not likely that he now held the office, for this could not at all comport with his travelling with St. Paul. Hence several, both ancients and moderns, who believe the identity of the persons, suppose that Erastus was not now treasurer, but that having formerly been so he still retained the *title*. *Chrysostom* thought that he still retained the employment.

**Quartus a brother.]** Whether the brother of Erastus or of *Tertius* we know not; probably nothing more is meant than that he was a *Christian*-one of the heavenly family, a *brother* in the Lord.

Verse 24. **The grace of our Lord]** This is the conclusion of *Tertius*, and is similar to what St. Paul used above. Hence it is possible that *Tertius* wrote the whole of the 22d, 23rd, and 24th verses, **{#Ro 16:22-24}** without receiving any particular instructions from St. Paul, except the bare permission to add his own salutations with those of his particular friends.

There is a great deal of disagreement among the MSS. and versions relative to this verse; some rejecting it entirely, and some of those which place the following verses at the end of **#Ro 14:23**, inserting it at the end of the 27th verse in that place. The reader who chooses may consult *Wetstein* and *Griesbach* on these discordances.

Verse 25. **Now to him]** In *Clarke's note at "Ro 14:23"*, I have shown that this and the following verses are by the most reputable MSS. and versions placed at the end of that chapter,



which is supposed by most critics to be their proper place. Some of the arguments adduced in favour of this transposition may be found in the note above mentioned. I shall therefore refer to Griesbach, and proceed to make a few short remarks on the verses as they occur *here*.

**Of power to stablish you]** To that God, without whom nothing is *wise*, nothing *strong*; who is as willing to teach as he is *wise*; as ready to *help* as he is *strong*.

**According to my Gospel]** That Gospel which explains and publishes God's purpose of taking the Gentiles to be his people under the Messiah, without subjecting them to the law of Moses. This is what he here calls the preaching of Jesus Christ; for without this he did not think, as Mr. Locke observes, that Christ was preached to the Gentiles as he ought to be; and therefore in several places of his epistle to the *Galatians* he calls it *the truth*, and *the truth of the Gospel*, and uses the like expressions to the *Ephesians* and *Colossians*. This is that *mystery* which he is so much concerned that the *Ephesians* should understand and adhere to firmly, and which was revealed to him according to that Gospel whereof he was made a minister. And it is probable that this grand *mystery* of bringing the Gentiles into the kingdom of God, without passing through the *rites* of the Mosaic law, was revealed more particularly to St. Paul than to any other of the apostles, and that he preached it more *pointedly*, and certainly with *more success*. See *Taylor* and *Locke*.

**Which was kept secret]** This purpose of calling the Gentiles, and giving them equal privileges to the Jews, without obliging them to submit to *circumcision*, &c.

Verse 26. **But now is made manifest]** Now, under the New Testament dispensation, and by my preaching.

**By the scriptures of the prophets]** Hints relative to this important work being scattered up and down through all their works, but no clear revelation that the Gentiles, who should be admitted into the Church, should be admitted *without passing under the yoke of the Mosaic law*. This was the *point* which was kept secret: as to the *calling* of the Gentiles, this was declared in general terms by the prophets, and the apostle quotes and makes a most important use of their predictions; but the other was a point on which the prophets gave no information, and it seems to have been peculiarly revealed to St. Paul, who received the *commandment of the everlasting God* to make it known εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, to *all the Gentiles*-all the people of the earth that were not of Jewish extraction. And it was to be made known for the *obedience of faith*, that they might *believe* its *doctrines* and *obey* its *precepts*; its universal voice requiring repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and circumcision of the heart, in the place of all Jewish rites and ceremonies.

Verse 27. **To God only wise]** This comes in with great propriety. He alone who is the fountain of *wisdom* and *knowledge*, had all this mystery in himself; and he alone who knew the *times*, *places*, *persons*, and *circumstances*, could reveal the whole; and he has revealed all in such a way as not only to manifest his unsearchable *wisdom*, but also his infinite goodness: therefore, *to him be glory* for his *wisdom* in devising this most admirable plan; and his *goodness* in sending *Christ Jesus* to execute it; to Him, through Christ Jesus, be *glory for ever*! Because this plan is to last for *ever*; and is to have no issue but in eternal glory.



**Written to the Romans from Corinthus, &c.]** That this epistle was written from Corinth is almost universally believed. That *Phæbe* was a *deaconess* of the Church at Cenchrea, we have seen in the first verse of this chapter; and that the epistle might have been sent by her to Rome is possible; but that she should have been the writer of the epistle, as this subscription states, *εγραφη δια φοιβης*, is false, for **#Ro 16:22** shows that Tertius was the writer, though by inserting the words *and sent*, we represent her rather as the *carrier* than the writer. This subscription, however, stands on very questionable grounds. It is wanting in almost all the ancient MSS.; and even of those which are more modern, few have it *entirely*, as in our common editions. It has already been noted that the *subscriptions* to the sacred books are of little or no authority, all having been added in latter times, and frequently by injudicious hands. The most ancient have simply *To the Romans*, or the Epistle *to the Romans is finished*. The word *Amen* was seldom added by the inspired writers, and here it is wanting in almost all the ancient MSS. As this was a word in frequent use in religious services, pious people would naturally employ it in finishing the reading or copying of this epistle, as they would thereby express their conviction of the *truth* of its contents, and their desire that the promises contained in it might be fulfilled to them and to the Church at large; and in this sense the word is not only harmless but useful. May the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in, and may all Israel be saved! This is treated of at large in this epistle; and to this prayer let every pious reader say AMEN! Often this word seems to be used as we use the word *finis*, i.e. the end. See the observations on this word at the end of the Gospel of John.

BEFORE I conclude this work, I shall beg leave to add several important observations, chiefly extracted from *Dr. Taylor*.

1. Paul, the apostle, writes to all the *Christians* at *Rome*, without distinction, as being called of *Jesus Christ*, beloved of *God*, called saints; as justified by *faith* and having peace with *God*; as standing in the grace of the Gospel, **#Ro 5:1, 2**; as alive from the dead, **#Ro 6:13**, &c. He gives them various exhortations: *Walk in newness of life. Let not sin reign in your mortal body. Yield yourselves unto God. #Ro 12:1*, &c.: *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. #Ro 14:10, 12: We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. #Ro 13:11-14: It is high time to awake out of sleep; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness; let us not walk in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in strife and envying; make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. #Ro 8:13: For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; μελλετε αποθνησκειν, ye shall hereafter die*, meaning, in the world to come. *But if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

2. The rites and ceremonies of the law of *Moses* were incorporated into the civil state of the *Jews*, and so might be considered as national and political usages. Now, as the Gospel did not interfere with or subvert any national polity upon earth, but left all men in all the several countries of the globe to live, in all things not sinful, according to the civil constitution under which it found them; so it left the *Jews* also at liberty to observe all the rites and injunctions of the law of *Moses*, considered as a part of the civil and political usages of the nation. And in this respect they remained in force so long as the *Jews* were a nation, having the temple, the token of God's presence and evidence among them. But when the temple was destroyed, and they were expelled from the land of *Canaan*, their polity was dissolved, and the *Mosaic* rites were quite laid aside. And as the time

in which this happened was near when the epistle to the *Hebrews* was written, therefore the apostle saith: *The first covenant, or Mosaical dispensation, was then decaying and waxing old, and ready to vanish away,* #**Heb 8:13**.

3. But though the Gospel was not in itself intended to unchurch the *Jews*, yet the *Jews* every where warmly opposed the preaching of it, though not for the same reasons. Some *Jews* opposed it *totally*, and rejected the whole Gospel as unnecessary, judging the *Mosaical* constitution, and their conformity to the law there delivered, completely sufficient for justification or salvation, without any farther provision made by the grace of God. These accounted *Christ* our Lord an impostor, and the Gospel a forgery; and therefore persecuted the apostles with the utmost assiduity and outrage, as deceivers who had no Divine mission. Such were the *Jews* who put *Stephen* to death, Acts 6, and 7. Such were they at *Antioch*, in *Pisidia*, who were *filled with envy, and spake against the things that were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming*, #**Ac 13:45, 50**. Such were the *Jews* at *Iconium*, #**Ac 14:2, 19**; at *Thessalonica*, #**Ac 17:5**; at *Corinth*, #**Ac 18:5, 6**, and in other places. And such a *Jew* was *Paul* himself before his conversion. He consented to the death of *Stephen*, *made havoc of the Church*, (#**Ac 8:3**;) and breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, #**Ac 9:1; 22:4; 26:9-11**.

4. What *Paul's* principles, and those of the unbelieving *Jews*, were, we may learn if we observe that the first persecution raised against the apostles at *Jerusalem* was *partly* on account of their *preaching through Jesus the resurrection from the dead*, #**Ac 4:1,2**. This gave great offence to the *Sadducees*; and *partly* because they openly affirmed that *Jesus*, whom the rulers of the *Jews* slew and hanged on a tree, was the *Messiah*, *whom God had exalted to be a prince and a Saviour*. This disgusted all the council and senate of the *Jews*, #**Ac 5:21, 28-31**. But with regard to these two particulars, the indignation of the *Jews* seems for some time abated, till the doctrine the apostles taught was better understood; and *Stephen*, in his dispute with some learned *Jews*, had suggested that the Gospel was intended to abrogate the *Mosaical* constitution, #**Ac 6:9-15**. This irritated the *Jews* afresh, especially the *Pharisees*, the strictest and most numerous sect among them. And *Saul*, one of that sect, (#**Ac 26:5; 23:6**;) being then a young man, just come out of *Gamaliel's* school, having finished his studies in the law, and being fully persuaded that the *Jewish* dispensation was instituted by God, never to be altered, but to abide for ever, he really believed that *Jesus* and his followers were deceivers, and that it was his duty to oppose them, and to stand up courageously for God and his truth. Thus he honestly followed the dictates of his own conscience. How far other unbelieving *Jews* were or were not upright in their opposition to the Gospel, God only knows; but their professed principles seem to be nearly the same. In short, they were for *seizing on the inheritance*, (#**Mt 21:38**;) and for engrossing all salvation and the favour of God to themselves. The *Jews* they judged were the only people of God, and the *Jewish* nation the only true Church, out of which there was no salvation. No man could be in a state of acceptance with God without observing the law of *Moses*. The works of the law, moral and ceremonial, must be performed in order to his being a member of God's Church and family, and having a right to future and eternal happiness. They expected the *Messiah* indeed and his kingdom; but not as if either had a reference to another world. The law, and a punctual observance of it, were the ground of their expectations in a future world. And as for the *Messiah*, they supposed his coming and kingdom related only to the temporal prosperity and grandeur of the *Jewish* nation, and the perpetual establishment of their law, by rescuing them out of the hands of the *Gentile* powers, who had greatly embarrassed and distressed their constitution. Thus

they endeavoured to *establish their own righteousness*, (#Ro 10:3,) salvation, or interest in God; an interest which they imagined for themselves, and which excluded men of all other nations, who they thought were in fact utterly excluded from the Divine favour and eternal life, as quite lost and hopeless. Against us *Gentiles*, they had the strongest prejudices, accounting us as perfectly vile, as nothing, as abandoned of God, only because we were not included in their peculiarity; while they imagined themselves to be vastly superior to us, and the only people beloved of God, purely on account of their external privileges and relation to God as the seed of *Abraham*; being circumcised, enjoying the law, the promises, and ordinances of worship, &c.

5. And this was another ground of their opposition to the Gospel when it was preached to the *Gentiles*. Indeed the apostles themselves, and the first *Christians* among the *Jews*, had for some time no notion of the Gospel's being preached to the *Gentiles*, till God in a vision convinced *Peter* it was his will that it should, #Ac 10:9-45. But the unbelieving *Jews* regarded the preaching of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, or the declaring that they were, upon their faith in *Christ*, pardoned and admitted into the Church of God, and to the hopes of eternal life, almost in the same manner as we should regard the preaching of the Gospel to brute creatures. They could not bear the thought that *the Gentiles*-any barbarous nations, should, only by faith, have an equal interest in God and the blessings of his covenant with themselves. They did not indeed deny the possibility of their being taken into the Church, and of obtaining salvation. But it must be only by their becoming *Jews*; they must first submit to the law, and yield obedience to its precepts and obligations, before they could be qualified objects of God's mercy. There was no grace, no part in the kingdom of God either here or hereafter, for a *Gentile*, unless he first became a *Jew*, and performed the works of the *Mosaical* law. By these sentiments they were led to do all they could to oppose the preaching of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, and became very bitter enemies to Paul, who was the apostle particularly selected and commissioned for that purpose. They could not allow the *Gentiles* to have any access to the privileges of God's Church and people, but through the door of the law; and to introduce them any other way was, not only to overthrow their law and peculiarity, but to deceive the *Gentiles*. Therefore they did all in their power to withstand the apostle, and to persuade the *Gentiles* every where that he was an odious impostor; that his Gospel was a forgery, destitute of Divine authority; that he proposed admitting them into the Church and covenant of God in a way which had no foundation in the declared will of God. Their law was the only Divine establishment, and obedience to it the only means to introduce them into the kingdom of God; and *Paul* could have no commission from heaven to teach otherwise, whatever he might pretend, or what miracles soever he might work. Of this sort of *Jews* the apostle speaks, #1Th 2:14-16.

Other *Jews* there were who believed the Gospel, and agreed that it ought to be preached to the *Gentiles*; but so that the *Gentiles*, at the same time they accepted the Gospel, were obliged to submit to the *law of Moses* in every part, otherwise they could not be *saved* or have any interest in the kingdom and covenant of God, #Ac 15:1. These taught that the *Gospel* was insufficient without the *law*. They differed from the forementioned *Jews* in that they embraced the faith of *Jesus Christ*; but agreed with them in this, that the law of *Moses* was to be in force for ever, and the observance of all its rituals absolutely necessary to a standing in the Church of God, and the hopes of eternal life. And for this reason they were upon pretty good terms with the unbelieving *Jews*, and avoided the persecution to which those who adhered to the pure and unmixed Gospel were exposed, #Ga 6:12.

These *Jews*, who were for joining *law* and *Gospel* together, were also great enemies to our apostle. He speaks of them, **#Php 3:2, 3, &c.**

6. Now against the mistakes of the infidel *Jews* the apostle thus argues in the epistle to the *Romans*: *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, have corrupted themselves, and are become obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and, if they repent not, will certainly fall under the wrath of God in the last day: consequently, as both are obnoxious to wrath, both must be indebted to grace and mercy for any favour shown them. The continuance of the *Jews* in the Church, as well as the admittance of the *Gentiles* into it, is wholly of *grace*; mere grace or favour. Upon which footing, the *Gentiles* must have as good a right to the blessings of God's covenant as the *Jews* themselves. And why not? Is not God the creator and governor of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*? And if both *Jews* and *Gentiles* have corrupted themselves by wicked works, it is impossible that either should have a right to the privileges of God's Church and people on account of **WORKS**, or obedience to the law of God, whether natural or revealed. It must be pure *mercy*, accepted by faith through Christ, or a persuasion of that mercy on their part, which gives that right. All must be indebted to grace. The works of the law never gave the *Jews* themselves a right to the privileges and promises of the covenant. Even Abraham himself, (the head of the nation, who was first taken into God's covenant, and from whom the *Jews* derive all their peculiar blessings and advantages,) was not justified by works of the law. It was free grace, or favour, which at once admitted him and his posterity into the covenant and Church of God. And that the grace of the Gospel actually extends to all mankind, appears from the universality of the resurrection; which is the effect of God's grace or favour in a Redeemer, and is the first and fundamental part of the *new* dispensation with regard to the gift of eternal life. For, as all were involved in death in consequence of Adam's sin, so shall all be restored to life at the last day in consequence of Christ's obedience; and therefore it is certain that *all men* actually have a share in the mercy of God in *Christ Jesus*.—Thus the apostle argues.

7. And we ought particularly to observe how he combats the engrossing temper of the *Jews* in his arguments. They could not engross all virtue to themselves, for they were as bad as other people; they could not engross God and his favour to themselves, for he was the governor and creator of *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; they could not engross *Abraham* and the promise made to him to themselves, for he is the father of *many nations*, and the believing *Gentiles* are his seed as well as the *Jews*; they could not engross the resurrection, the necessary introduction to eternal life, to themselves, because it is known and allowed to be common to all mankind.

8. And he had good reason to be so large and particular in confuting the mistakes of the infidel *Jews*. For had their principles prevailed, the Gospel could not have maintained its ground. For if we must have performed the works of the *law*, before we could have been interested in the blessings of the *covenant*, then the Gospel would have lost its nature and force; for then it would not have been a *motive* to obedience, but the *result* of obedience; and we could have had no hope towards God prior to obedience. Therefore the apostle has done a singular and eminent piece of service to the Church of God, in asserting and demonstrating the free grace and covenant of God as a foundation to stand upon, prior to any obedience of ours, and as the grand spring and motive of obedience. This sets our interest in the covenant, or promise of God, upon a foundation very clear and solid.

9. To understand rightly the epistle to the *Romans*, it is farther necessary to observe, that the apostle considers mankind as obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and as standing before God, the Judge of all. Hence it is that he uses forensic or law terms, usual in *Jewish* courts: such as the LAW, RIGHTEOUSNESS or JUSTIFICATION, being JUSTIFIED, JUDGMENT to CONDEMNATION, JUSTIFICATION of LIFE, being made SINNERS, and being made RIGHTEOUS. These I take to be *forensic* or *court* terms; and the apostle by using them naturally leads our thoughts to suppose a court held, a judgment seat to be erected by the most high God, in the several cases whence he draws his arguments. For instance, **#Ro 5:12-20**, he supposes *Adam* standing in the court of God after he had committed the first transgression; when the *judgment* passed upon him for his offence, *came upon all men to condemnation*; and when he and his posterity, by the favour and in the purpose of God, were again *made righteous*, or obtained the *justification of life*. Again, **#Ro 4:1-18**, he supposes *Abraham* standing before the bar of the supreme Judge; when, as an idolater, he might have been condemned, but through the pure mercy of God he was justified, pardoned, and taken into God's covenant, on account of his faith. He also supposes, **#Ro 3:19-29**, all mankind standing before the universal Judge, when Christ came into the world. At that time neither *Jew* nor *Gentile* could pretend to justification upon the foot of their own works of righteousness, having both corrupted themselves, and come short of the glory of God. But at that time both had righteousness or salvation prepared for them in a Redeemer; namely, the righteousness which results from the pure mercy or grace of God, the lawgiver and judge. And so both (instead of being destroyed) had admittance into the Church and covenant of God, by faith, in order to their eternal salvation.

10. But besides these three instances, in which he supposes a court to be held by the supreme Judge, there is a fourth to which he points, **#Ro 2:1-17**, and that is the *final judgment*, or the court which will be held in the day when *God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*. And it is with regard to that future court of judicature that he argues **#Ro 2:1-17**. But in the other cases, whence he draws his arguments, he supposes the courts of judicature to be *already* held; and, consequently, argues in relation to the economy, constitution, or dispensation of things to this present world. This is very evident with regard to the court which he supposes to be held when our Lord came into the world, or when the Gospel constitution was erected in its full glory; for, speaking of the justification which mankind then obtained through the grace of God in *Christ*, he expressly confines that justification to the *present time*, **#Ro 3:26**, *To demonstrate, I say, his righteousness*, εν τω νυν καιρω, *at the PRESENT TIME*. This plainly distinguishes the righteousness or salvation, which God *then* exhibited, from that righteousness or justification which he will vouchsafe in the *day of judgment* to pious and faithful souls.

11. Before the coming of our Lord, the peculiar kingdom of God was confined to the *Jewish* nation, and to such only of the heathens as were incorporated among them by becoming *Jews*, and observing the whole law of *Moses*. And the Jews firmly believed it would always continue in the same state.

But when our Lord came, the mystery of God, which had been concealed both from *Jews* and *Gentiles*, was revealed; namely, that the *Gentiles* also, even men of all nations, should be *freely* admitted into it. This was an act of great favour, considering the darkness, idolatry, and wickedness into which the heathen world was then sunk.

But God mercifully passed over their former sins; and our Lord commissioned his apostles, and particularly St. *Paul*, to promulge a general pardon; and to call or invite all who repented, and accepted of the grace, to all the blessings and privileges of his kingdom; confirming their interests in those blessings by pouring out the Holy Ghost upon them, in various miraculous gifts, or endowments, above the ordinary capacity of men. This was a very evident seal to them (and to us too) of a title to the blessings of God's Kingdom and covenant, #Ga 3:2-5.

And it had such an effect upon the Christian *Jews* at *Jerusalem* that, though they were at first greatly disgusted at Peter for treating the first uncircumcised *Gentile* converts as members of the kingdom of God, (#Ac 11:2, 3,) yet, when they heard that the Holy Ghost was fallen upon those converts, they were much surprised and glorified God, saying, *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted* (the benefit of) *repentance unto* (eternal) *life*; which, before this, they verily believed could not have been granted unto them without obedience to the law of *Moses* by being circumcised.

But the unbelieving *Jews* paid no regard to this or any other argument in favour of the uncircumcised *Gentiles*. The notion of admitting them into the kingdom and congregation of God, only upon faith in *Christ*, they opposed and persecuted every where with great zeal and bitterness. And it was not long before good impressions wore off, and old prejudices revived among even the believing *Jews*. Numbers of them very stiffly, and with much warmth and contention, endeavoured to persuade the *Gentile* converts that, *except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved*, or admitted to the privileges of the kingdom of God and the hope of eternal life, #Ac 15:1, 2.

The *Gentiles*, even the most learned and wise amongst them, were wholly ignorant in the affair. They were perfect strangers to the Gospel scheme: they had no notion or expectation of being received into the kingdom and covenant of God, and could have no knowledge of it but what they received from some or other of the *Jews*: nor could they have any objection against it worth regarding but what came from that quarter. And the *Jews* had a considerable influence among them, having synagogues in most, if not all, the great towns in the empire, from the *Euphrates*, as far as *Rome* itself, which numbers of the *Gentiles* frequented, and so had received impressions in favour of the Jewish religion.

But had the Jewish notion prevailed, that no part of mankind could have any share in the blessings of God's covenant, the pardon of sins and the hope of eternal life, but only such as were circumcised and brought themselves under obligations to the whole law of *Moses*; had this notion prevailed, the extensive scheme of the Gospel would have been ruined, and the gracious design of freeing the Church from the embarrassments of the law of *Moses* would have been defeated. The Gospel, or glad tidings of salvation, must not only have been confined to the narrow limits of the *Jewish* peculiarity, and clogged with all the ceremonial observances belonging to it, which to the greatest part of mankind would have been either impracticable, or excessively incommodious, but, which is still worse, must have sunk and fallen with that peculiarity. Had the Gospel been built upon the foundation of the *Jewish* polity, it must have been destroyed when that was demolished, and the *whole* kingdom of God in the world would have been overthrown and extinct at the same time; and so all the noble principles it was intended to inspire, to animate and comfort our hearts, would have

been lost; and all the light it was calculated to diffuse throughout the world would have been quite extinguished.

It was therefore the apostle's duty to vindicate and assert the truth of the Gospel which he was commissioned to preach to the *Gentiles*; and of very great consequence to prove *that we Gentiles are called to be the children of God, and are interested in his covenant, and all the honours, blessings, and privileges of his family and kingdom here upon earth, only by faith in Christ, without coming under any obligations to the law of Moses, as such*: which is the main drift and subject of this epistle.

12. It is worth notice that there is this difference in one respect between the *gospels* and *epistles*, namely, that our Lord, in the *gospels*, represents the doctrines and principles of the Christian religion chiefly in an absolute sense, or as they are in themselves: but, in the *epistles*, those doctrines and principles are chiefly considered in a relative view; as they respect partly the foregoing *Jewish* dispensation, and partly the future corruption of the Christian Church; but principally, as they respect the different state of *Jews* and *heathens*; showing how just, true, and necessary they are with reference to both, and directing and exhorting both to value them and to make a right use of them. This was absolutely necessary to a full explication of the Gospel, to guard it against all objections, and to give it a solid establishment in the world.

And we must not forget that in the epistle to the *Romans*, the Gospel is presented in this relative view, as adapted to the circumstances of us *Gentiles*, and obliging us to all virtue and piety.

13. Farther, we can neither duly value this epistle, nor be sensible how much we are indebted to the author of it, unless we make this sentiment familiar to our thoughts; namely, *That St. Paul is the patron and defender of all that is by far the most valuable and important to us in the world, against the only opposition that could be made to our title and claim*. Give me leave to explain this by an easy comparison.-A person, to me unknown, leaves me at his death 1000 £. a-year: I myself can have no objection against the noble donative; and the good pleasure of the donor, who had an undoubted right to dispose of his own, may silence any of the caviller's surmises. But a person claiming, as heir at law, gives me the greatest uneasiness. He alleges the estate was entailed, and that he has a prior title, which renders the donation to me invalid. Here I want an able advocate to prove that his pretensions are ill grounded, and that my title is perfectly good and firm. St. Paul is that advocate: he argues, and strongly proves, that we, believing *Gentiles*, have a just and solid title to all the blessings of God's covenant; and effectually establishes us in possession of all the noble principles, motives, comfort, hope and joy of the Gospel. The sum of what he demonstrates is comprehended in **#1Pe 2:8-10**; *They, the Jews, stumble, and lose their ancient honours and privileges; but ye, Gentiles, are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of heathenish darkness into his marvellous light*. Thus, on the authority of God, we *Gentiles* have an indisputable right to all the blessings of the Gospel; and, if we receive by Christ Jesus that grace which pardons and cleanses the soul, we shall pass from the Church militant into the Church triumphant.

At the conclusion of my notes on this very important epistle I feel it necessary to make a few additional remarks. I have sincerely and conscientiously given that view of the apostle's work which I believe to be true and correct. I am well aware that many great and good men have understood this



portion of Divine revelation differently, in many respects, from myself: they have the same right of private judgment which I claim, and to publish those opinions which they judge to accord best with their views of the Gospel. My business is to give what I think to be the mind of my author; and every where I have laboured to do this without even consulting any pre-established creed. I hope my readers will take in good part what is honestly intended. I wish to avoid controversy; I give my own views of Divine truth. The plan on which I have endeavoured to expound this epistle shows it a beautiful, highly important, and consistent whole; a work which casts the clearest light on the grand original designs of God relative to the diffusion of the Gospel and its blessings over the face of the earth; illustrating many apparently dark and unaccountable providences; fully proving that though clouds and darkness are often round the supreme Being, yet, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Where this grand view of this epistle is not taken, the major part of its beauties are lost. God, who is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, shows by his apostle in this admirable epistle, that from the *beginning* he had purposed to call the whole Gentile world to that salvation which he appeared for a time to restrain to the Jews alone, and which they imagined should be exclusively theirs for ever. This prejudice the apostle overturns, and shows that the Gentiles also had an equal share in the election of grace. We should be careful how we make that *partial* and *exclusive* which shows the Fountain of goodness to be no *respector* of *persons*, or even ultimately of *nations*, who like the sun, the faint though brightest image of his glory in this lower world, shines equally upon the just and the unjust. God, with the same benevolent design, orders his Gospel to be preached to every creature under heaven.

The peculiar phraseology of this epistle I have also endeavoured to explain, and where this could not be conveniently done in the notes, I have generally stated it at the end of the chapters. And, for the explanations of difficult points, or articles which may have been but slightly handled in the notes, I beg to refer to those concluding observations; and particularly to those at the end of chapters 8 and 9. But it is necessary to make some remarks on this epistle, as an *epistle directed to the Romans*; that is, to the Church of God founded at Rome. Though the Gospel was preached and established there long before either the apostle had visited this city, or written this epistle, yet we may rest assured that the doctrine contained here was the doctrine of the *Church of Rome*, and therefore that Church was *holy* and *apostolic*. If it do not continue to walk by the same rule, and mind the same things it is no longer so: in a time then when the Roman Church that *now is* invites the attention of the Christian world, by making great and bold pretensions-assuming to itself the titles of *holy*, *catholic*, and *apostolic*; representing Rome as the fountain whence pure truth and apostolical authority emanate-it may be useful to examine whether such pretensions are well founded, and not permit confident assumption, noise and parade, to carry away our understandings, and occupy the place of reason, argument, and truth. This however cannot be done to any extent in this place; only it may be necessary to state, that, as the doctrines. &c. of the Roman Church profess to be *apostolic*, they must be found in the *epistle to the ROMANS*, this being the only apostolic work directed to that Church. If they are not to be met with *here*, it would be absurd to look for them anywhere else. But there is not one *distinguishing doctrine* or *practice* of the Romish Church found in this epistle. Here is no pope, no exclusive churchship, no Peter-pence, first fruits, legatine levies, dispensations, pardons, indulgences, reliques, Agnus Dei's, jubilees, pilgrimages, crusades, carnivals, canonizations, abbeys, monasteries, cells, shrines, privileged altars, auricular confessions, purgatories, masses, prayers for the dead, requiems, placebos, dirges, lamps, processions, holy water, chrisms, baptism of bells, justification by works, penances, transubstantiation, works of supererogation, extreme unction,

invocation of saints and angels, worship of images, crossings of the body, rosaries, albs, stoles, &c.; nor the endless orders of priests, abbots, monks, friars, nuns, anchores, hermits, capuchins, &c., &c. Here are no inquisitions, no writs de hæretico comburendo, no auto da fe's, no racks, gibbets, tortures, nor death in all variable and horrid forms, for those who may differ from this *mother* Church in any part of their religious creed. In vain will the reader look into this epistle for any thing that is not consistent with *sound sense*, inflexible *reason*, and the justice, purity, and endless benevolence of the great God, the equal Father of the spirits of all flesh. Here, indeed, he will see the total fall and degeneracy of all mankind strongly asserted and proved; the utter helplessness of the human race to rescue itself from this state of corruption; the endless mercy of God, in sending Christ Jesus into the world to die for sinners; the doctrine of justification by faith in the blood of the Lamb; regeneration by the energy of the Divine Spirit producing that holiness without which no man can see God. Here the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ takes place of all Jewish sacrifices, and works or sufferings, of man, in reference to justification. Here is nothing puerile, nugatory, or superstitious; no *dogma* degrading to the understanding; no religious *act* unworthy of the spirit and dignity of the Gospel; nothing that has not the most immediate tendency to enlighten the mind, and mend the heart of man; in a word, every thing is suitable to the state of man, and worthy of the majesty, justice, and benevolence of that God from whom this epistle came. Here, indeed, is the model of a pure Church. What a pity it is not more closely followed by all, whether Protestant or popish, that profess the faith of Christ crucified! Alas! that a Church which was once pure and apostolic, and still retains all the essential doctrines of the Gospel, should compound them with others which are not only the commandments and inventions of men, but which so counteract the influence of the truths still retained, as to destroy their efficacy; and no wonder, when this foreign admixture is an assemblage of rites and ceremonies borrowed partly from the *Jews* and partly from the ancient *heathens*; rendered palatable by a small proportion of *Christianity*.